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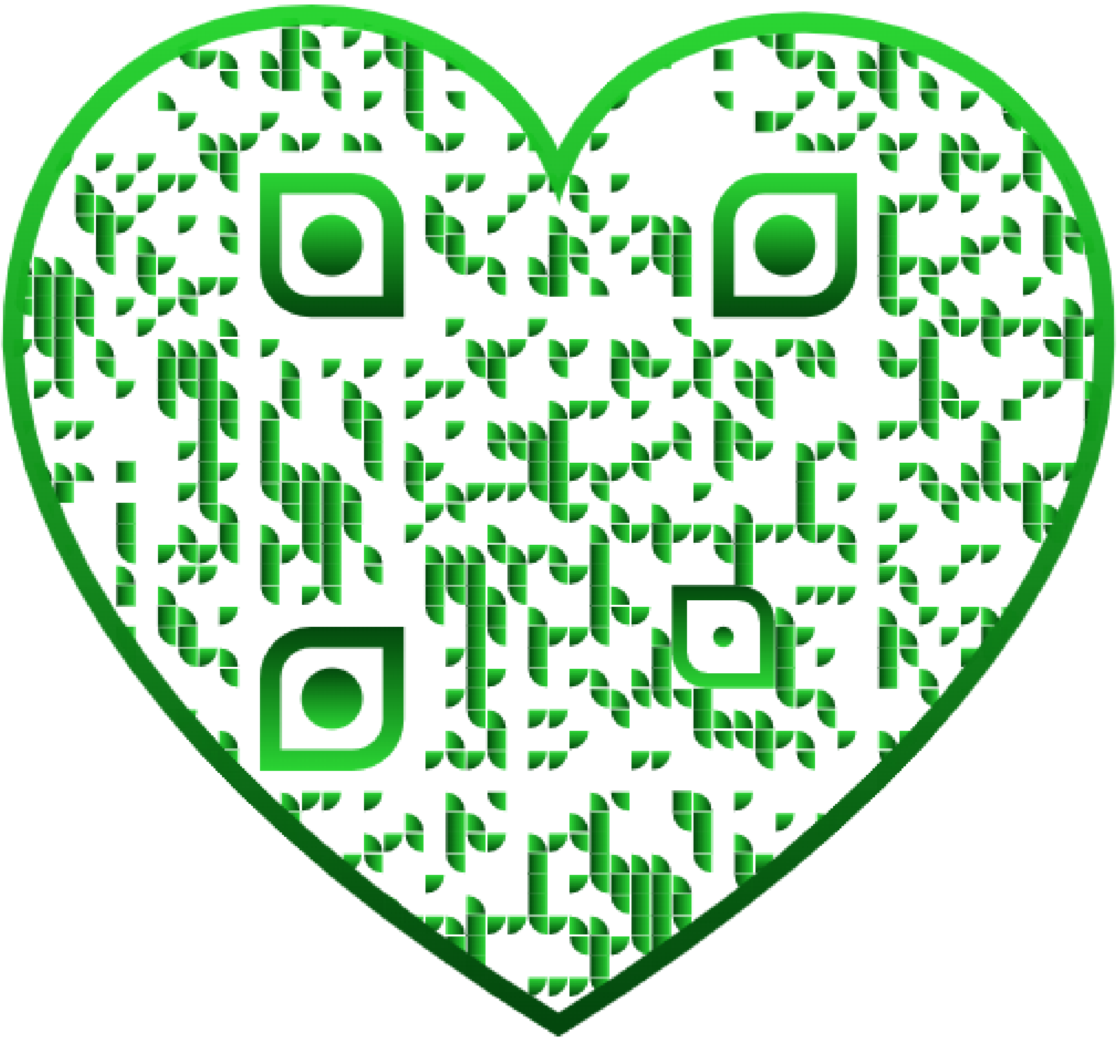

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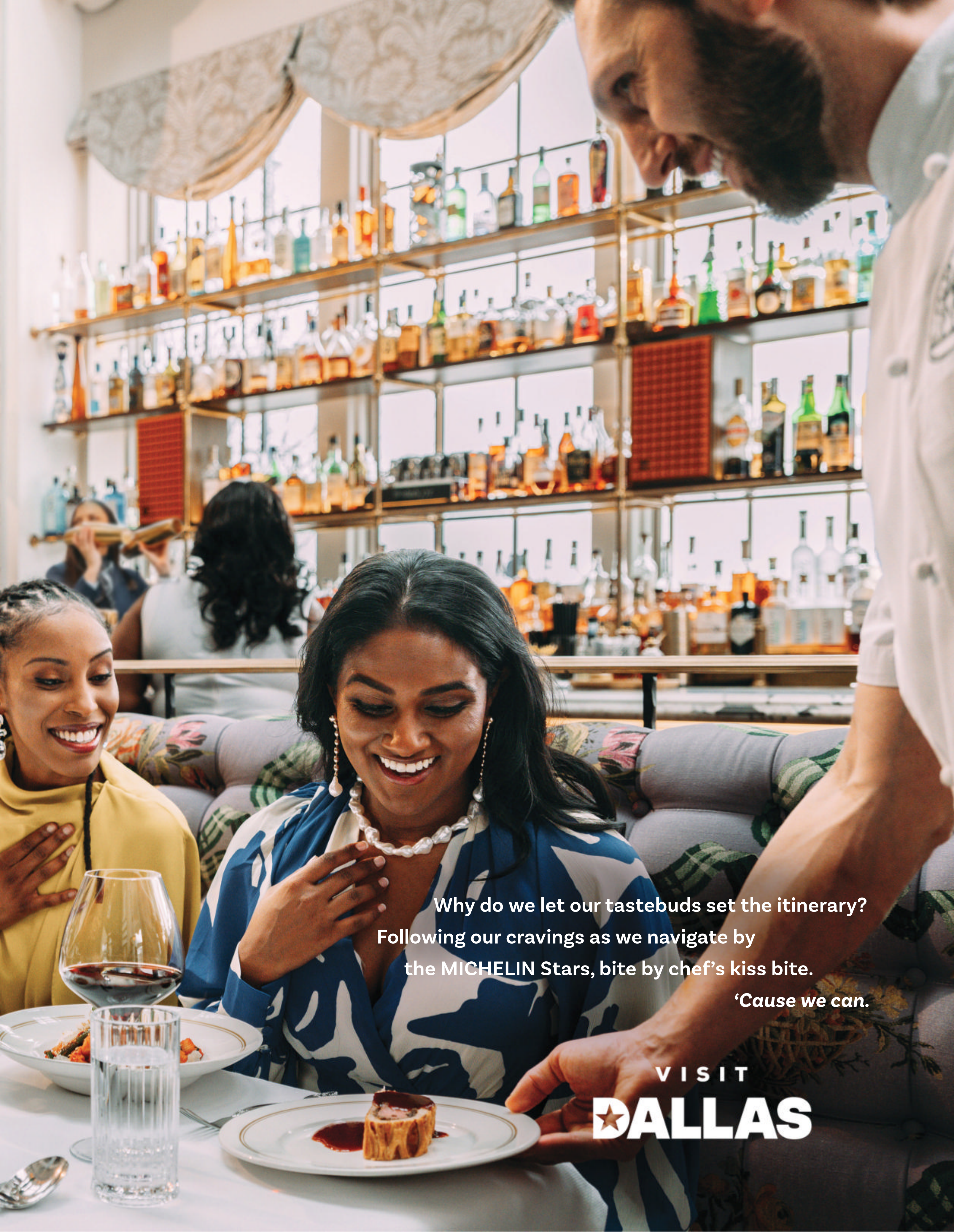
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Dubbed the "Cape Cod of the Midwest," Door County has long been one of Wisconsin's favorite vacation spots. Go before the secret's out.

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In his new book, Los Angeles–based photographer Brian Chorski captures dreamy, personal moments from his travels across the American West and Mexico.

CHRISTINA HOLMES

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We're kicking off our celebration of the country's 250th birthday with a guide to the must-do experiences in every U.S. state, plus Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico.

GEORGIA

CALIFORNIA

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ALEX LAU

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What is your favorite small town* in North America?

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"Battle Lake, Minnesota, is home to my favorite art gallery showcasing mixed media, Art of the Lakes. And four miles outside of town sits the incredible Glendalough State Park, perfect for canoeing any of its five lakes or wandering its woods." —**K.L.**

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ELLEN CARPENTER

WRITER

Adventure Playground, page 92
IG @ellencarpenter11

When writer and editor Ellen Carpenter interviewed photographer Brian Chorski for the photo essay *Adventure Playground*, their conversation sparked wanderlust in her, kindling a new interest in California. “For me, California is synonymous with the coast, but some of my favorite pictures of Brian’s are of the mountains, wildflowers, and alpine lakes in the eastern part of the state,” she says. Originally from Kentucky, Carpenter has an affinity for traveling across the United States, which began when she took her first trip to New York City (which she now calls home) at 13.

HARRISON HILL

WRITER

Family Style, page 66
IG @1harrisonhill

For Brooklyn-based writer Harrison Hill, traversing the five boroughs of New York City was both familiar and novel. As the Big Apple celebrates its 400th birthday, Hill wanted to visit and share the stories behind some of the city’s longest-lasting institutions. One unexpected result? The refrigerator in his apartment turned into “a culinary record of the reporting process, filled with leftovers from all the restaurants” he visited in the name of research. Hill’s writing has appeared in the *Threepenny Review*, *GQ*, and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*.

CHRISTINA HOLMES

PHOTOGRAPHER

Where the Lake Meets the Sky, page 80
IG @chwhat

While shooting Door County, Wisconsin, award-winning photographer Christina Holmes says she was most surprised by the vibrancy of the state’s remote communities. As a New Yorker with roots in Detroit, she was shocked during her visit to find that Door County has “some of the best sourdough pizza on the globe” at a spot called Inland in Baileys Harbor. It’s proof, she says, “that it’s always good to walk into every moment with an openness to explore further.”

LATIFAH SAAFIR

ARTIST

Feature Opener, page 65
IG @latifahsaafirstudios

Textile artist Latifah Saafir combines her engineering background with a passion for sewing to design graphic patterns for quilts that she sells for quilters to make at home. For Afar, Saafir created a mini quilt that “captures the spirit of adventure and the possibility of exploration,” using a vivid color palette to communicate that. “When I travel I’m constantly capturing images and ideas for quilts: scenes from nature, the brickwork on a building, or how other cultures combine colors,” she says.

Photographer Brian Chorski’s travels took him across the American West and Mexico’s Baja California Peninsula (pictured).

FROM TOP: BRIAN CHORSKI; PHOTO BY SEBASTIAN KIM (HARRISON HILL)

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The town of Banff sits within Canada's first national park, established in 1885.

DEE K/UNSPLASH

A Continental Celebration

IN THIS ISSUE, we showcase the multitude of travel experiences available throughout North America. It's a busy and exciting time for U.S. travel, as the country will mark its semiquincentennial (aka 250th birthday) in 2026.

We like to get ahead of big moments like this to help inspire and empower people about where to go next—and share ways to use your travel dollars for good. On page 29, we offer 52 Reasons to Travel to Every State This Year, ranging from Philadelphia's burgeoning wine scene to expedition cruises in Alaska's Aleutian Islands. The package is just the beginning of our 18-month commemoration of our country's 250th birthday, an ambitious editorial initiative running across Afar's print, digital, audio, email, and social platforms.

We cannot talk about North America without mentioning our wonderful neighbors to the north. This April, I had a very inspiring weeklong visit to Alberta. I was impressed by the enthusiasm that greeted my group of travelers there, and even more so by the fascinating experiences Canadians are putting together across the province.

South of Calgary, rancher-turned-whiskey-distiller David Farran is opening a hotel where visitors can see small-batch whiskeys being made with barley harvested

Douglas Friedman at The Langham, Chicago

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using muscular Percheron draft horses and antique 1920s farming equipment. Near Banff, in Canmore, the world-famous Indigenous artist Jason Carter and his partner, Bridget Ryan, have created a gallery and live arts venue that features local performers in Broadway-quality shows, including *Into the Woods* this fall. Three hours north, the team at the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge offers guests the opportunity to hear fireside stories from Cree ambassador Matricia Bauer. And five hours east of Jasper (and 90 minutes from Edmonton), the Métis Indigenous community worked with the province's largest rancher to create a wilderness park so visitors can appreciate a landscape where bison, elk, and horses once again roam freely.

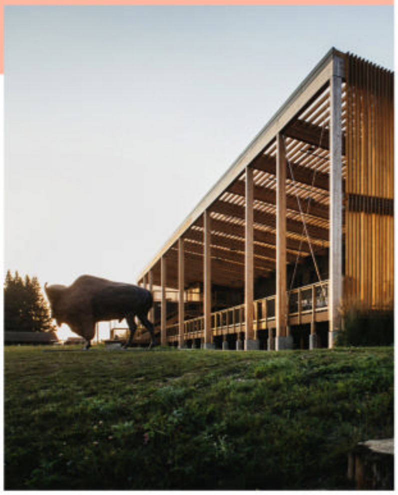
These are just some of Alberta's experiences to be enjoyed by locals and travelers alike. I got such a positive feeling from seeing these efforts to better the lives and lifestyles of the province's residents. Global visitors allow these companies to thrive. As the world struggles through so many issues with trade, economics, and politics, it is continually gratifying to see how travel can be a force for good.

Happy journeys,
GREG SULLIVAN
Cofounder and CEO

Left: Storyteller and drummer Matricia Bauer is a Cree ambassador at the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge.

Top right: At Métis Crossing, travelers can learn about the community's historic role in fur trading.

Bottom right: The meals at Sucrerie de la Montagne are prepared on a traditional stove.



Oh, Canada!

Over on *afar.com*, we're highlighting lesser-known Canadian travel experiences from coast to coast.

GO FAT-TIRE BIKING
In Banff's backcountry, riders bike on groomed trails flanked by snow-dusted evergreens and rushing creeks deep in the Rocky Mountains.

SAMPLE MAPLE SYRUP
Head to a *cabane à sucre*, or sugar shack, in Québec during springtime. At cabins in the forest, visitors can see how syrup is made and partake in hearty feasts.

HIKE COASTAL TRAILS
Some 34 miles of trails run along Newfoundland and Labrador's "Iceberg Alley." Most visible in May and June, but increasingly uncertain, chunks of ice annually float southward from Greenland.

Visit afar.com/canada for more trip ideas.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF ROAM CREATIVE AND INDIGENOUS TOURISM ALBERTA; COURTESY OF TRAVEL ALBERTA/COOPER & O'HARA; COURTESY OF SUCRERIE DE LA MONTAGNE

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by **LATRIA GRAHAM**

Illustrations by **SIMONE NORONHA**

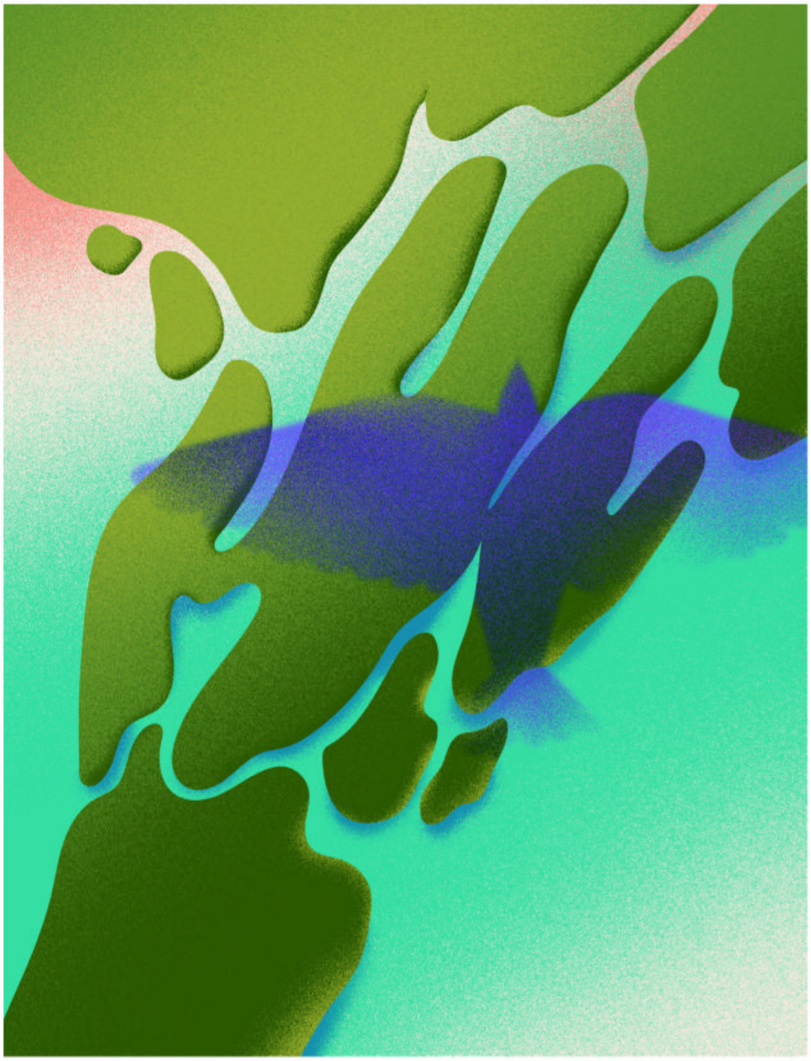
Wide-Open Spaces

After visiting 24 national parks in the U.S., contributing writer Latria Graham meditates on their complex legacy—and considers how we can enjoy them in a more responsible way.

I WAS INTRODUCED to our country's national park system by the Harlem Renaissance writer Zora Neale Hurston. Captivated by her portrayals of rural Black life and of nature as both a source of beauty and a wellspring of hardship, I followed her trail to Everglades National Park in 2013.

Accompanied by my parents, I learned more about the landscape replete with mangroves and sawgrass marshes. Together, we marveled at the jewel-colored purple gallinules and watched alligators sunbathing along the banks. I discovered that, decades ago, such individuals as conservationist Marjory Stoneman Douglas were responsible for protecting these very flora and fauna from the interests of developers. This history sharpened how I thought about U.S. national parks, often touted as "America's best idea," a phrase first credited to writer and historian Wallace Stegner in 1983 and later popularized by filmmaker Ken Burns's documentary miniseries of the same name.

Today, the National Park Service (NPS) encompasses 63 national parks and 433 other units, including battlefields, memorials, parkways, rivers, reserves, monuments, and wildlife refuges. In the years since that first trip, I've sought to explore the personal and transformative power



Options for engaging with a more holistic version of history exist—we just have to look for them.

of travel to the national parks. I caught the earliest sunrise in the United States atop Cadillac Mountain at Acadia National Park in Maine and spent a morning snowshoeing Hurricane Ridge in Washington's Olympic National Park. But it wasn't until a 2025 trip to Big Bend National Park that my thinking changed in a major way, again.

I rarely encountered other visitors in the park, which is hemmed in by the mountains of southwest Texas. It seemed that the land was mine to enjoy as I wished, away from crowds and the high-intensity thrum of civilization. But the fantasy has uncomfortable roots: I had to acknowledge that to create refuges for their own interests, white settlers had removed Indigenous people from their sacred spaces and homelands. All told, 90 million acres of tribal land were transferred to the national forest system between 1887 and 1934. I acknowledged that, in actuality, the story of America's parks is multifaceted, with fraught threads of ownership, power, and exploitation.

In 2016, Congress passed the NATIVE Act to "enhance and integrate Native American tourism." As of September 2024, the NPS has more than 109 costewardship agreements with tribes, including comanagement partnerships for Canyon de Chelly National Monument (Arizona), Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve (Alaska), Grand Portage National Monument (Minnesota), and Big Cypress National Preserve (Florida), sites that have long been of cultural and spiritual significance.

Last year, 125 acres of land were transferred from the NPS back to the California Yurok Tribe with a contract to build a new visitor center that highlights Indigenous history and serves as a gateway to Redwood National and State Parks. And in fall 2024, the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation opened the Three Affiliated Tribes National Park in North Dakota, joining the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, who established Frog Bay Tribal National Park in Wisconsin in 2012—the first of its kind.

Every spring, I buy an $80 America the Beautiful Pass, because it allows me to recreate at national parks while also contributing to their maintenance and infrastructure. But before any visit, I prompt myself: *How did this park come to be? Who are the original stewards of the land, and how are their descendants involved in its care today?* The answers are helpful guides as I move through parks and ask questions, engage in conversation with my fellow travelers, and notice what's mentioned—and what's missing—in visitor centers.

My awareness of this history also informs the activities I choose to do. In a popular park like the Grand Canyon, for example, I spend much of my time away from the well-traveled trails and instead take in some of the Indigenous cultural programming offered at Desert View Watchtower. Where possible, I seek out Indigenous operators licensed to work in the parks, such as Blackfeet family–owned Sun Tours, which offers interpretive experiences in Montana's Glacier National Park. Options for engaging with a more holistic version of history exist—we just have to look for them.

After all, if the national parks are America's best idea, then adaptation is perhaps the country's best trait. And just as my perception about the parks' identity has evolved over the years, there's space for the narrative around these spaces to change, too. One visit at a time.

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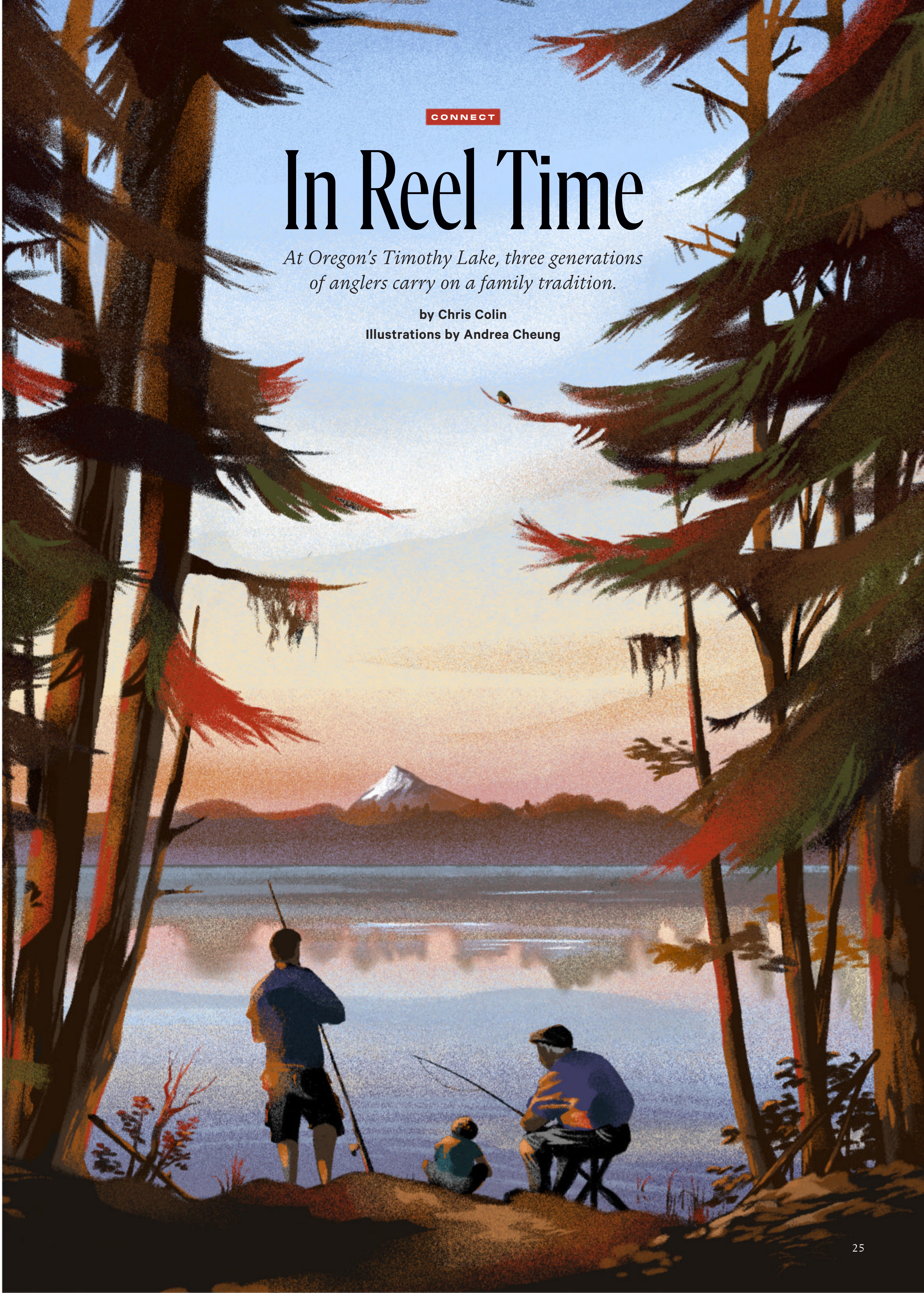
SCAN FOR OFFERS

In Reel Time

At Oregon's Timothy Lake, three generations of anglers carry on a family tradition.

by Chris Colin

Illustrations by Andrea Cheung



ONE DAY LAST YEAR, I asked my father what he loved about fishing. A wistful look came over him.

“There’s just something about standing hip-deep in a Montana trout stream,” he replied, “or on the bank of a Vermont lake shaded by pines.”

I nodded, then pointed out to him that he’d never done either of those things.

Fantasy and reality commingle on the angler’s plane. A hardened realist doesn’t continue to stuff clattering rods into the back of the hatchback, results be damned. Even on those occasions when the fish deign to bite, the moment exists within a larger fantasy that this is somehow a Special Thing, and not just a scaly animal on the end of some string.

My dad, 82, absorbed my correction but merely shrugged. In his earliest memories he’s prowling Long Island Sound for flounder and bass. Asking what he loves about fishing is like asking a bear what it likes about being a bear. The hook is set too deep to be appraised.

There’s no hook in me, though not for lack of opportunity. In a somewhat desultory Virginia childhood, fishing with my father was a recurring motif. Even during my parents’ separation, we’d find our way to a pond or a shady riverbank fairly regularly. The memories lurk beneath a rippled surface: My dad tangled in line, cursing at knots. The clang of the tackle box in the metal canoe. The tuna sandwich, beckoning.

Mostly there was waiting. How many hours did I pass on muddy banks, index finger bent, waiting for a twitch? The anticipation surged through my little body—then gradually gave way to questions. *How long is this operation going to take, exactly? How do we know the fish are even hungry?* Then, a little older, *Maybe this isn’t really my thing?* At 18, I walked away from it all, toward wilder adventures, oblivious to the homing device that would go off when I had a son of my own.

So, on a recent Friday, I found myself approaching the bank of a lake shaded by pines. After my decades-long hiatus, I’d decided to take my dad and 11-year-old son, Casper, on a fishing trip of our own, before either of them aged out of such a thing. For three days we would catch our meals in the grandeur of Oregon’s Mount Hood National Forest, all dense, misty firs and streams dark and cold; here and there a massive eagle. It feels almost jarringly wild there, the kind of forest where you go to disappear, though somehow it’s within striking distance of civilization. A person can fly into PDX at 9, hit an artisanal Eritrean food truck by 10, and at noon be in woods so thick the sun can’t penetrate.

We’d reserved a campsite near Timothy Lake, a vast shimmering jewel plopped in the center of all these pines. Whatever fishing represents to my dad, I wanted to give him a chance to pass it on to his grandson. As for Casper, I wanted him to enjoy the same nature fantasies I’d indulged on those childhood fishing expeditions—living by your wits, surviving off the land. Maybe it’s silly to foist fantasies on someone. But as the generational guardian of old-school hook-through-worm living, I felt obliged, if only to give my boy something to write about decades hence.

I

IF IT’S A CINEMATIC, gear-forward fishing adventure you seek, look elsewhere; that’s not our brand. We are campsite-too-close-to-the-restroom people, futz-with-the-rusty-reel people. What we lack in mastery we make up for in proximity to a simpler time. *No screens! Minimal expertise! Three generations concerned only about catching dinner!*

Dramatis personae: Casper is rapidly shedding his kid skin for preadolescence. He’s sporty and pensive, a speedy left back and a thinker of big thoughts. In a month he’ll start taking the city bus by himself, and I’ll start scrolling through baby photos.

My dad’s a handsome fella, an affable New York Jew who stops strangers to admire their babies or try out a Russian phrase he’s been practicing. He knows one song—“Stormy Monday”—and calls all dogs boys. He’s been known to carry a stick of butter in the center console of his Honda. He would like to tell you about the Battle of Crete.

More than anything else, though, my dad’s an optimist. Angling or otherwise, he is undeterred. It’s a quality I admire more and more the older I get. There are worse ways to move through life than with unblinking faith in your next cast.

After pitching our tent, our first stop was a narrow stream feeding the lake from its south end. It seemed to me too shallow for any self-respecting fish, but my father noticed a promising pool shaded by a rock overhang. Nestling his tackle box in some reeds, he began tying our lures.

We stood quietly and started casting, the occasional red-winged blackbird trilling into the silence. In time I realized what it was saying: *No fish live in this water.*

On to Timothy Lake proper, where Oregon was really doing its thing. Warm pine needle carpet. Sun slanting through tree line. Gentle lapping of wavelets. We reached the water’s edge, and immediately a fat mullet hurled itself into the air.

Over the next hour we threw out a hundred casts from the shore—jigs, topwaters, spinnerbaits. We cast so many times that my dad caught one of his own lures, lost to an earlier snag. But no fish lived in this water.

Baffled, we retreated to our campground. Dusk fell, and we fried up a couple of rib eyes that, thankfully, my dad had suggested we buy, even though we had planned to catch and eat fish constantly.

Snug in our sleeping bags, eager for the next day’s glories, we read ourselves to sleep by lantern.

T

THE NEXT MORNING, I scrambled eggs, and then we hit a different spot in the lake. No fish lived there. That was fine, we found another. No fish lived there, either. We found a floating dock leading far out into the water. Fish obviously lived there. We cast for an hour. No fish lived there.

Walking back to our site, Casper pantomimed catching a trout.

"It's getting away!" he said.

I maneuvered an imaginary net. Could we imagine catching a fish so vividly that it actually scratched our itch? We were debating this possibility when a St. Bernard came bounding onto the path.

"Sorry, that's Stella," a woman called out.

"Good boy," my dad said.

I noticed the woman was packing up a tent.

"Big storm coming," she said. "Lightning, hail. Pretty extreme."

Hard to believe; the sky was *Simpsons* blue. Thirty minutes later, a thousand timpani rumbled through the forest. For three courageous minutes we debated staying. The next rumble decided for us. Securing our stuff at the site as best we could, we jumped in the car and bombed up to the town of Government Camp. We found a room just before the lightning and hail began.

Lying in my hard motel bed, I felt something strange. I was *sad*. I wanted us to catch a fish. My indifference to this sport went deep—but somehow, suddenly, so did this desire. I wanted my father and son to shriek at that initial tug, I wanted them to crank the reel frantically, and then, while the world outside our campsite spun further into madness, I wanted that fish to sizzle in our pan on a chilly Oregon night.

When I woke the next morning, I knew it would be so. The sky was blue again and every unbitten hook had, I saw now, taken us closer to the statistical inevitability of a catch. We hauled back to the campground. I was inspecting our storm-soaked gear when my dad mumbled something.

"What?" I asked.

"They're gone."

The fishing poles. In our haste to flee, we'd left them out, right by the road.

Not much was said for a while. We shook the water off the tent and stuffed our sleeping bags into sacks. I told Casper how sorry I was about the poles and proposed we distract ourselves with a walk by the lake. He agreed, a good sport.

Down by the water, there was no evidence of the previous night's storm. We skipped stones, and my dad fiddled with his pocketknife.

Suddenly, an idea.

"Why don't we just jump in?" I said.

Casper's eyes widened. And then, without a word, he was kicking off his sneakers.

I dove right in; Casper made the mistake of testing the water first. It wasn't exactly warm.

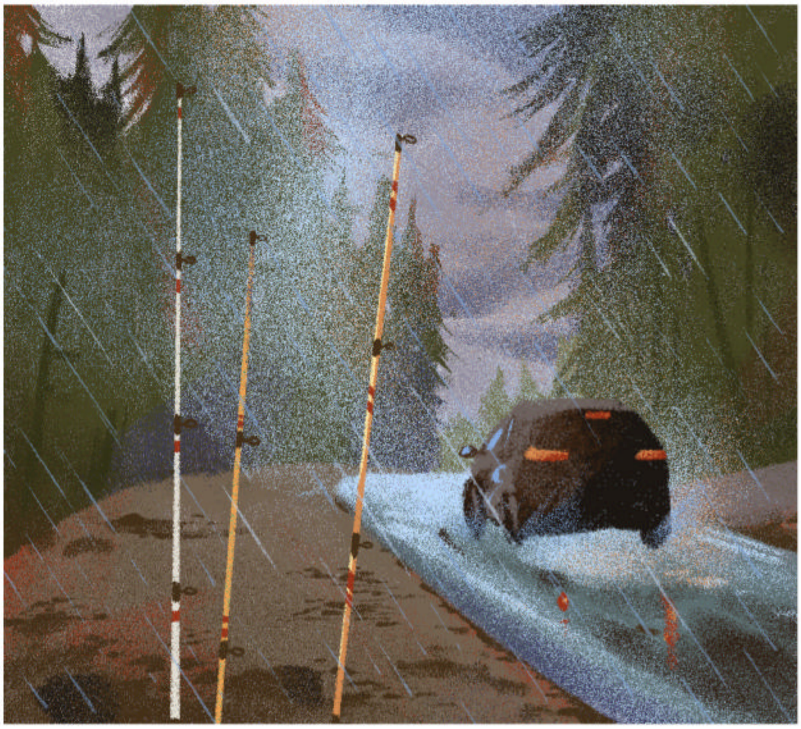
Every unbitten hook had taken us closer to the statistical inevitability of a catch.

"Maybe I'll just read?" he said.

"That's fine!" I called over my shoulder, swimming farther out. Among my parental vows: No shaming the kids into acts of bravery. But I noticed my father had put away his knife and taken interest in the situation. Suddenly, I knew what was coming.

"Hey," he said to Casper. "I thought you were *tough*."

Maybe it was naive to think three Colins could go fishing without once slipping into an intergenerational collision of some sort, but something in me fired.



"Dad," I shouted, and then, with some saltiness, shared my position on the policing of manliness.

"*What?*" he replied. Shoulders up, theatrical innocence. "I was kidding!" Irritation at my irritation.

"It's OK," Casper assured both deranged parties.

Poor guy, caught between two ancient grinding plates. But he handled it just right. He pulled off his shirt and soon we were both bobbing out where that mullet had jumped Friday. I tried to grasp how impossibly soon he would be a middle-aged man, and then an older one, but I couldn't get there.

For now, there was just me and my son and the hundreds of brook trout and cutthroat and kokanee and bullhead and bass no doubt swimming around us—weaving through our legs, snickering at our bad luck this weekend. But our luck was remarkable. I treaded water and stared at Casper's great toothy smile, and the sweet look of his ears when his hair is wet. Ⓐ

Contributing writer Chris Colin explored Utrecht for Afar's Winter 2024 issue. Illustrator and art director Andrea Cheung is based in Montreal.

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IN THE MOMENT

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EDITED BY
NICHOLAS DERENZO

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ELIZABETH SEE

GEORGIA

ESCAPE TO A SWAMP THAT'S EVEN MORE MAGICAL AFTER SUNSET

Though it doesn't quite have the name recognition of the Everglades, the Okefenokee, on the Georgia–Florida border, is a wetland of mammoth proportions: North America's largest blackwater swamp, it could fit D.C. within its borders nine-plus times. The water gets its tealike appearance from the tannins in decaying plants, and the night sky above is just as inky. No wonder the swamp's Stephen C. Foster State Park was named the first "gold-tier" Dark Sky Park in the Southeast, due to its exceptionally low light pollution. The best way to experience this wilderness is on a one- to four-day, naturalist-led excursion with Okefenokee Adventures. After a day of kayaking or canoeing, campers set up tents on floating platforms, and the hoots of barred owls provide the soundtrack for stargazing. Travelers may be hearing much more about the region soon: The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge has been nominated to join the UNESCO World Heritage List. —*Nicholas DeRenzo*

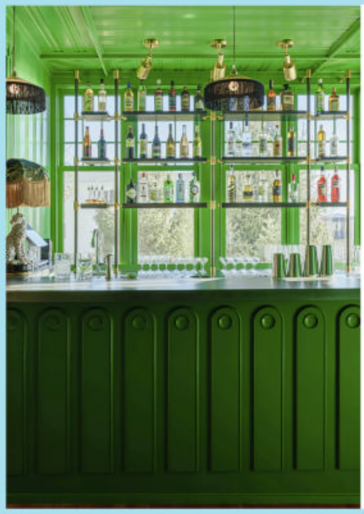
After the sun sets, the Okefenokee Swamp comes alive with bats, raccoons, owls, opossums, and even flying squirrels.

DAVID WALTER BANKS

NORTH DAKOTA

DINE AT A RESTAURANT WHERE GREAT PLAINS CUISINE GETS A GLOW UP

North Dakota's rib-sticking cuisine originates from flavors enjoyed by its 19th-century settlers, including Scandinavians and Russian-born ethnic Germans. At Huckleberry House in Bismarck, Le Cordon Bleu–trained chef Cody Monson is bringing heritage dishes into the present with modern techniques and unexpected ingredients. That means the *knoephla* (a creamy dumpling stew) comes with *vadouvan* curried pumpkin, the *fleischkuekle* (a fried turnover) is topped with dill pollen and birch sap syrup, and smoked bison sausage and toasted rye crumbs bolster ravioli-like cheese buttons. —*ND*



CONNECTICUT

CHECK INTO A HISTORIC MANSION

Set in the forested hills of northwestern Connecticut, Litchfield welcomed a new hotel this spring that perfectly captures its pastoral sophistication. Belden House & Mews merges an 1888 colonial revival mansion with an 1891 firehouse and a 1959 modernist building. The interiors are by Champalimaud Design (founder Alexandra Champalimaud is a town resident), and each of the 31 rooms offers guests a chance to celebrate area craftspeople: Items like ceramic lamps, grass cloth wall coverings, and four-poster beds were created in studios mere minutes away. Particularly lovely is the jewel box bar, done up in a vivid green that evokes snap peas and leafy trees on a summer morning. —*ND*

WASHINGTON, D.C.

MOVE TO THE BEAT AT A MUSEUM ROOTED IN D.C. MUSIC HISTORY

How many of D.C.'s museums speak to the culture of the District itself? A few miles from the National Mall, across the Anacostia River, the new Go-Go Museum & Cafe is dedicated to the funk subgenre that developed here in the 1970s and was declared the official music of the city in 2020. "It came out of the ground here," says chief curator Natalie "Dr. Go-Go" Hopkinson, a professor at American University. "It's the expression of the Chocolate City." Under the musical direction of Anwan Glover (an actor from *The Wire* and go-go band member), the museum features physical and digital artifacts, a backyard concert stage, and a recording studio for aspiring area musicians. "The best way to learn about go-go," Hopkinson says, "is to hear it and move to it." —*Justin Goldman*

VIRGINIA

SLEEP AT A FOLKSY NEW HOTEL IN RICHMOND

Richmond's Fan District—between the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and Virginia Commonwealth University—will soon welcome its first boutique hotel, Shenandoah Mansions, set in a 1906 red-brick apartment building. Its owners describe the property as "a Southern darling with a dark side," and indeed, the decor pays homage to mystical folk culture. The 73 rooms are outfitted with mahogany beds draped in richly colored fabrics; celestial-patterned rugs; and delft-inspired bathroom tiles painted with vignettes depicting the seven deadly sins. Feeling inspired? Pen the next Southern Gothic fable from the writing desk or cast-iron tub in one of the suites. —*ND*

WYOMING

GLAMP UNDER THE STARS IN THE TETONS

Opened in May 2024, Tammah Jackson Hole is a year-round glamping resort where adventurers immerse themselves in the Wyoming wilds. Less than a five-minute drive from both Grand Teton National Park and the town's ski center, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, Tammah's 11 geodesic domes feature king-size beds, fireplaces, and unobstructed views of the Teton Range by day and the starry skies at night. Visitors can also take in those panoramas from the property's barrel sauna or around campfires, perfect spots to unwind after a day out on the slopes or trails. —*JG*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF HUCKLEBERRY HOUSE; READ MCKENDREE/BELDEN HOUSE & MEWS; COURTESY OF TAMMAH JACKSON HOLE; BLAKE SHORTER

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FAMILY ADVENTURES

In Marathon, after feeding stingrays, turtles, and more at **Florida Keys Aquarium Encounters**, head to **Crane Point Hammock Museum and Nature Trails** and dip your toes in the tidal pool. Then, walk along the turn-of-the-century **Old Seven Mile Bridge** or ride the **Pigeon Key Express**, a tram that takes passengers across the span four times daily to visit the museum, and tour historic **Pigeon Key**. Tuck in for the night at family-friendly **Hawks Cay** or beachfront properties **Tranquility Bay** or **Isla Bella Beach Resort**.

NATURE LOVER'S PARADISE

See the smallest subspecies of the American white-tailed deer swim in the Lower Keys' shallow waters at the **National Key Deer Refuge** at Big Pine Key, then go birding at **Bahia Honda State Park**, where you'll find willets, sanderlings, and great white herons. End your day by kayaking among backcountry mangroves with **Keys Kayak Tours** before checking into one of the island's eco-lodges or the five-star **Little Palm Island Resort & Spa**.

RICH HISTORY

Count dolphins in the waters off the southernmost key of Key West as your seaplane flies you over **Dry Tortugas National Park**, where you can check out the 19th-century **Fort Jefferson** and swim or snorkel in its surrounding clear blue waters. Back on dry land, dive into literary history by visiting the **Hemingway Home and Museum**, followed by an evening ghost tour of haunted homes. Wind down at the **Gardens Hotel** or **Sunset Key Cottages**, located on a private island that's minutes away by boat.

SPORTFISHING CAPITAL

If you're angling for a fishing adventure, hop on a backcountry or offshore charter boat, and drop your line for marlin, sailfish, or bonefish in Islamorada. Then jump into the water with dolphins and stingrays at **Theater of the Sea**. Rest at the **Moorings Village**, a former coconut plantation, or the Atlantic-facing **Cheeca Lodge & Spa**.

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TEXAS

SAVOR THE GLOBALLY INSPIRED FLAVORS OF AN IMMIGRANT-LED BARBECUE RENAISSANCE

The best thing since sliced bread? Naan, pita, and injera replacing it on barbecue platters across the Lone Star State. Once defined by its rigid rules, Texas barbecue is getting a shake-up thanks to a growing class of pitmasters telling stories of migration and international influences through such dishes as *seekh kebab* sausage and smoky brisket tacos.

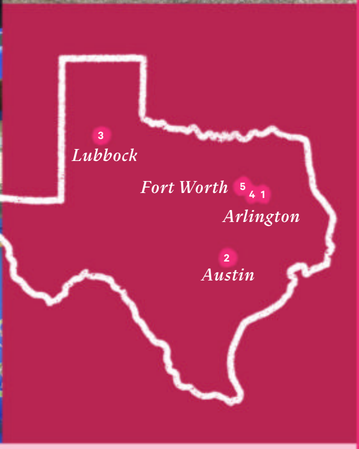
SMOKE'N ASH BBQ

KEMURI TATSU-YA

JIMÉNEZ Y FRIENDS

HABIBI BARBECUE

SABAR BBQ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DANIEL VAUGHN; JODY HORTON (2); DANIEL VAUGHN; THANIN VIRIYAKI; DANIEL VAUGHN

①

Smoke'N Ash BBQ, Arlington
He's from Waco, she's from Addis Ababa. When Patrick and Fasicka Hicks transitioned their barbecue truck to a brick-and-mortar spot west of Dallas, they added a few Ethiopian dishes and loved the fusion. "Somehow hickory wood goes perfect with berbere spice," Fasicka says. Now, they glaze meat with *awaze* (chili sauce) and fry injera flatbread to make nachos, too.

②

Kemuri Tatsu-Ya, Austin
Prolific Tokyo-born chef Tatsu Aikawa melds Texas barbecue with Japanese *izakaya* bar food. Combining the two cuisines was a natural progression for him, resulting in serrano-miso barbecue sauce brisket, pork ribs with carrot-ginger glaze, and banana pudding with matcha. "When people migrate, they take the flavors of their upbringing with them," Aikawa says.

③

Jiménez y Friends Barbecue y Taqueria, Lubbock
Mike Flores quit his job at a local barbecue shop in 2022, when his mom and brother opened a bakery and burrito place like those his family has run since 1969. He held barbecue pop-ups there on weekends, before the concepts merged. Now, they serve smoked meats on sweet Mexican *concha* rolls with apple-jicama slaw—Tex-Mex identity, on a plate.

④

Habibi Barbecue, Arlington
When Marc Fadel competed on his high school's barbecue team (only in Texas!), he hewed closely to the state's traditions. Now in college, he runs his own barbecue truck, bringing flavors from his Lebanese American roots. "To serve Texas Lebanese-spiced brisket with tabbouleh and *batata kizbara* (garlic potatoes) warms my heart and my stomach," he says.

⑤

Sabar BBQ, Fort Worth
Zain Shafi began thinking about adding spices found in Pakistani *seekh kebab* to sausage while working at Goldee's BBQ. "It kind of spiraled from there." He now pairs tandoori smoked turkey and burnt-ends *nihari* (meat stew) with dal. "Our form of beans are lentils," Shafi says. Fruit *chaat* and *kachumber* salad, meanwhile, offer a cooling crunch that mimics coleslaw.
—Naomi Tomky

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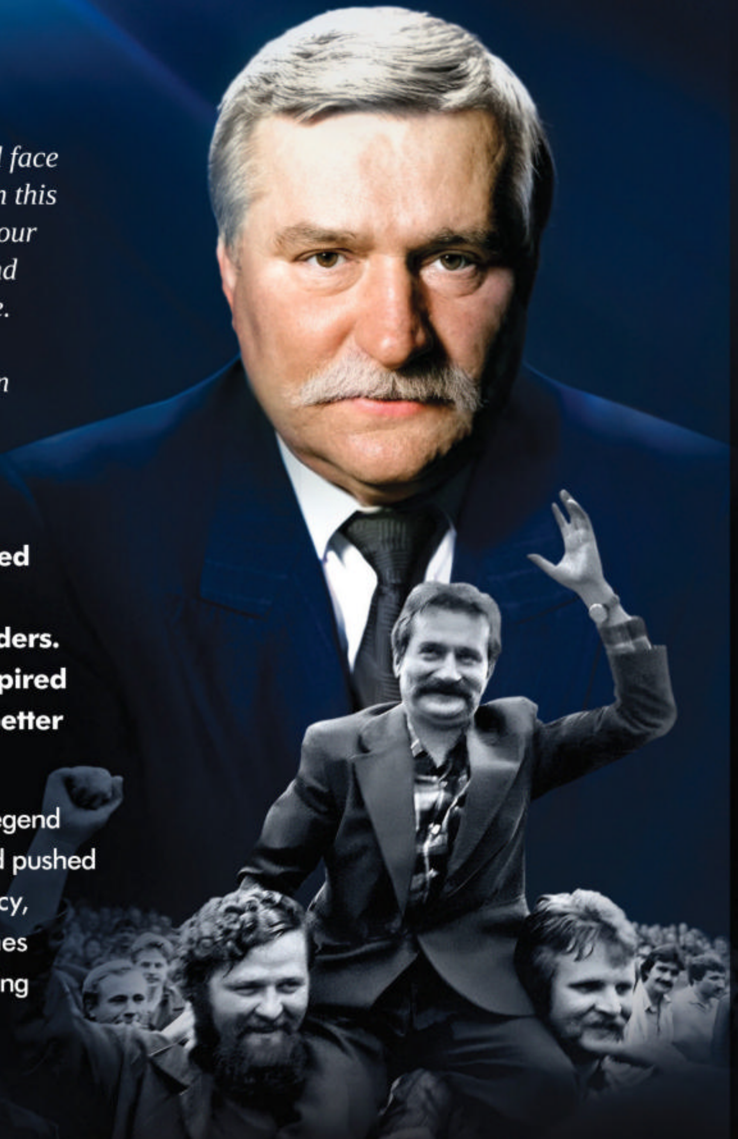

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Sep 24	Columbus, OH
Sep 26	Pittsburgh, PA
Sep 27	Baltimore, MD
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Oct 4	Chicago, IL
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NEW MEXICO

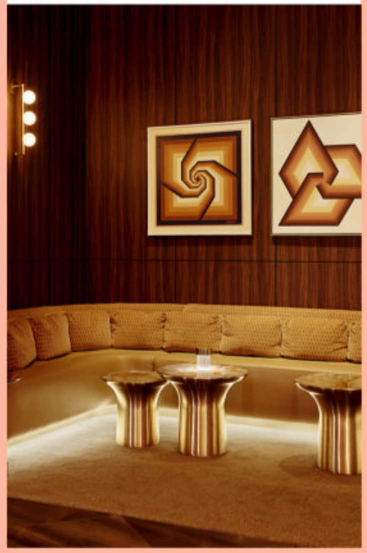
DIVE INTO THE TAOS ART SCENE AT A RESTORED MOTEL

This spring, Taos welcomed the 50-room Hotel Willa, a Casetta Hotels property, which opened in a converted 1940s-era motel. But despite its no-frills start, the space has been reborn with high-desert design: terra-cotta walls, repurposed vigas (wooden beams), and even bear fetishes (ceremonial carvings) made out of clay from the Taos Pueblo. There's an artist-in-residency program organized in partnership with the Paseo Project and a gallery; its inaugural show celebrated artists whose works are found throughout the hotel and artisans who helped with renovations. Johnny Ortiz-Concha, a chef and artist who grew up on the Pueblo, helped develop the on-site restaurant, Juliette, and he and his partner, Maida Branch, source ingredients, such as mountain oregano, from their own farm. —*ND*

NEVADA

TIME TRAVEL IN VEGAS

Las Vegas is having a major '70s moment. The circus company Spiegelworld launched its immersive DiscoShow last year at the Linq Hotel, with an attached restaurant called Diner Ross, serving disco fries, green goddess wedge salads, and Midori sours. Over at the Bellagio, pop star Bruno Mars looked to the Me Decade for his exclusive Pinky Ring lounge (pictured), which centers around a retro sunken conversation pit. Next up, the Evel Knievel Museum is in the process of relocating from Topeka to the Arts District in downtown Las Vegas; its massive new location will house an outpost of Evel Pie, a cult pizzeria that pairs Dungeons and Dragons and Chuck E. Cheese aesthetics, complete with an arcade, a carnival ride, and an animatronic metal band. —*ND*



RHODE ISLAND

TOAST LOCAL CHEFS AT A NEW FOOD HALL

Providence's Union Station opened in 1898 with 14 rail lines to shuttle passengers across New England. After shutting down in the 1980s, the space housed restaurants, before eventually sitting vacant. In March 2025, after a $25 million reimagining, it reopened as the Track 15 food hall, with seven local vendors serving everything from Mexican and Indian street food to fish sandwiches and Rhode Island–style clam chowder (that's clear broth, for the uninitiated). Developer Chris Marsella says that supporting area restaurateurs instead of nationally recognized celebrity chefs was a no-brainer. "We have amazing talent here," Marsella says. "Every place claims to be a 'food city' now. But Providence? We really are a food city. And now we have one more addition to a vibrant scene." —*Ellen Carpenter*

ALASKA

HEAD (FAR) WEST ON AN EXPEDITION CRUISE

Any cruise through Alaska can be an adventure, but a journey to the Aleutian Islands feels like traveling to the ends of the earth. HX and UnCruise Adventures now sail to this far-flung archipelago, which comprises 1,200 miles of stunning scenery (active volcanoes, a petrified forest) and blockbuster fauna (orcas, sea otters). On HX, cruisers can venture even farther afield to St. Matthew Island, in the middle of the Bering Sea, where millions of seabirds—such as the crested auklet and tufted puffin—come to feed and nest each summer. "Located more than 200 miles from the nearest village, St. Matthew Island is uninhabited and seldom visited," says Alex McNeil, chief expedition officer at HX. "The island's dramatic landscapes and rich wildlife are fully protected as part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, and it is often described as the most remote place in Alaska." —*EC*

KANSAS

SIP CLEVER COCKTAILS IN THE SUBURBS

Fifteen minutes from downtown Kansas City, suburban Shawnee is home to one of the country's most creative bars, Wild Child. Here, modernist cocktails made with hickory bark cordial, vermouth caramel, and tomato dust come served in glass ice cream cones or ceramic faces or topped with edible ink (as in the strawberry-flavored Flying Colors, pictured). Even cooler is the extensive menu of nonalcoholic concoctions, including twists on espresso martinis and Negronis. Owner Jay Sanders makes his own N/A spirits in-house by redistilling the booze out of ingredients like absinthe and gin. Do we understand the science? Not fully. Is it delicious? Absolutely. —*ND*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF HOTEL WILLA; CATIE BERGMAN; JAMES SANDERS; SEAN DAVIDSON

WEST VIRGINIA
To the place I belong
almost heaven

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LOUISIANA

TASTE THE FUTURE OF GULF COAST SEAFOOD AT A NEW ORLEANS FISH MARKET

Porgy's Seafood Market co-owner Caitlin Carney (left) and "lady monger"/chef Camille Staub show off the catch of the day.

At Porgy's Seafood Market in Mid-City New Orleans, fishmonger and co-owner Caitlin Carney is on a first-name basis with the Gulf Coast suppliers who help fill the counter. These relationships are a defining ethos of her petite market, with its vintage photos and racks of boil spice and fish jerky. But the beauty of the place is just how much of what's sold here is left to chance: Porgy's is on a mission to sell bycatch and boost the fishing industry in the process.

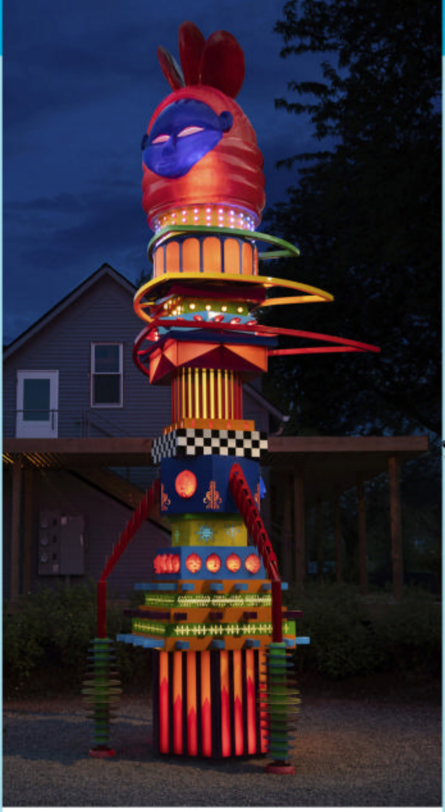
"Bycatch is a fish or crustacean that ends up in a net meant for something else," says Carney, whose arms feature colorful fish tattoos. Traditionally, bycatch species went to waste, got tossed back, or were used as bait, but Carney leans into their delicious potential. "We purchase them instead."

As a result, the case at Porgy's presents an ever-evolving roster of species not often found on NOLA menus: porgy, the place's sweet, buttery namesake; colorful parrotfish; sheepshead, which have oddly humanlike teeth; and even barracuda. Shoppers can take home whole fish to cook or order them in dishes like po'boys, crudos, sashimi, or smoked fish dip.

These species also have a way of inspiring culinary creativity. "Our crispy 'cuda bites came about on a whim," Carney says. "We had trouble getting folks to try barracuda, so we made it into fresh fish nuggets, battered in our proprietary dredge and fried." She serves them with herbs, chilies, and a Thai-style dipping sauce. "They're a cult classic now."

—Jenny Adams

RITA HARPER



MICHIGAN

WORSHIP AT THE ALTAR OF ART IN DETROIT

Detroit is a city constantly reinventing itself. To see a dynamic recent example of this transformation, head 15 minutes east of downtown to the new Little Village cultural corridor. Here, wife-and-husband gallerists JJ and Anthony Curis converted a 1911 Romanesque revival church into a free arts space and performance venue with a Black arts library in the transept and a B&B in the former rectory. The creativity spills out onto the grounds, where there's a skate park designed by skateboarder Tony Hawk and artist McArthur Binion, a sculpture garden with monumental pieces by Charles McGee, and a pair of "art altars" featuring rotating works such as *The Mothership Connection* (pictured), a 26-foot-tall installation by British Trinidadian artist Zak Ové. —*ND*

MISSISSIPPI

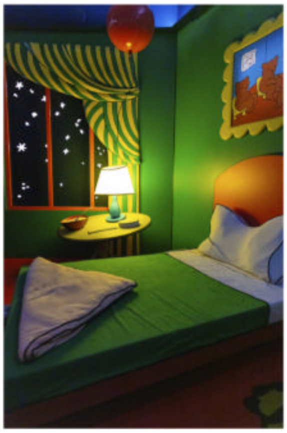
STOP INTO A PAIR OF RESTAURANTS BRIDGING OLD AND NEW IN THE DEEP SOUTH

The all-day Jackson hangout Elvie's (pictured) has earned national acclaim for its chic take on Southern hospitality. The space glides from a.m. bakery (bacon and egg grit fritters) to afternoon bar (French 75 Jell-O shots), and dinners highlight area farmers and anglers. In 2024, co-owners Hunter Evans and Cody McCain revitalized the nearby Mayflower Cafe, an institution opened 90 years ago by Greek immigrants. Order the daily blue plate special, which might include crawfish tetrazzini or feta-brined fried chicken—plus salad, two sides, bread, and iced tea for under $15. —*ND*

COLORADO

STARGAZE FROM BED AT A NEW DARK SKY RESORT

Southern Colorado's San Luis Valley has everything from quirky roadside attractions (peep the UFO Watchtower) to the otherworldly Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve, where piles of sand stretch five times taller than the Statue of Liberty. As of this spring, it's also home to one of the country's most exceptional astrotourism retreats. Kosmos Stargazing Resort & Spa recently opened the first two of its planned 20 villas, featuring a geodesic dome living area, a hot tub in a bubble (for star-watching while soaking), and an observatory deck with telescopes. In the works is a planetarium with astronomy lectures and a greenhouse-inspired spa. —*ND*



MISSOURI

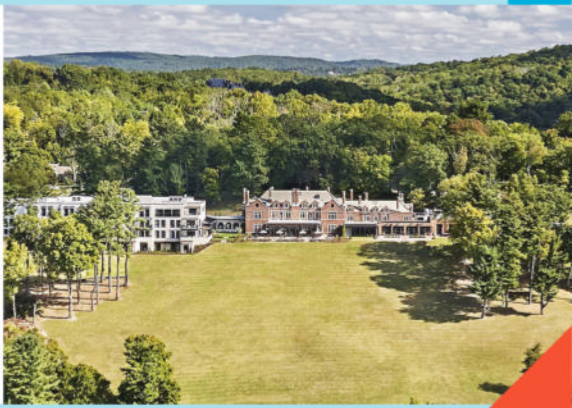
IMMERSE YOURSELF IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AT A KANSAS CITY MUSEUM

At Rabbit Hole, an experiential museum of children's literature in Kansas City, kids can take a bath with the titular pup from *Harry the Dirty Dog*, play in the kitchen from *Blueberries for Sal*, answer the phone in the great green room from *Goodnight Moon* (pictured)—or simply find a nook to read, in and around each exhibit. Former bookstore owners Deb Pettid and Pete Cowdin opened the museum in March 2024, and with help from artists and fabricators, they'll rotate exhibits through more than 70 iconic works from the last century. Here, exiting through the gift shop—fittingly named Lucky Rabbit—is a way to keep the story going at home. —*EC*

NEW JERSEY

RECHARGE AT A SYLVAN ESTATE IN THE GARDEN STATE

New Jersey is the country's most densely populated state, but that doesn't mean there isn't room to roam: In October 2024, the Pendry Hotels group turned the 1912 Tudor-style Natirar estate—once owned by the king of Morocco—into a sprawling countryside resort in Somerset County. While the 68 rooms are elegant and the spa beckons, the best way to enjoy Pendry Natirar is by spending as much time outside as possible: visiting with the chickens and sheep, touring the beehives and greenhouses, joining in archery and axe-throwing lessons, or setting off on a sunset e-bike ride through these bucolic settings only an hour west of Manhattan. —*ND*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: PD REARICK; COURTESY OF ELVIE'S; KATIE CURRID; COURTESY OF PENDRY NATIRAR

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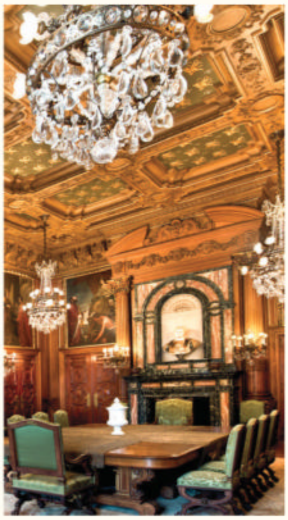
The Elms, Newport

Autumn in Providence

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Explore the Arts

Catch a festival and visit a landmark studio.

Time your trip to attend the **Rhode Island Black Film Festival** in Providence or the legendary **Newport Jazz Festival**. Year-round, discover **Fleur-de-Lys Studio**, part of the **Providence Art Club** and co-founded in the 19th century by painter Edward Mitchell Bannister.

Taste Something New

Sample standout flavors at restaurants and bars across Providence.

Pop into the Black-owned **Black Leaf Tea & Culture Shop** for a tea latte, a mocktail, or one of the bold signature blends. Then, head to **The Eddy**, where bartender Michael Silva is known locally for his roaming cocktail events.

Take a Tour with Purpose

Visit Black-owned businesses along the way.

Join a farm tour with the **African Alliance of Rhode Island**, which is known for its seasonal night market in Providence, too. You can also check out **Quaintly**'s micro-urban plots and sip spirits at **White Dog Distilling** in nearby Pawtucket.

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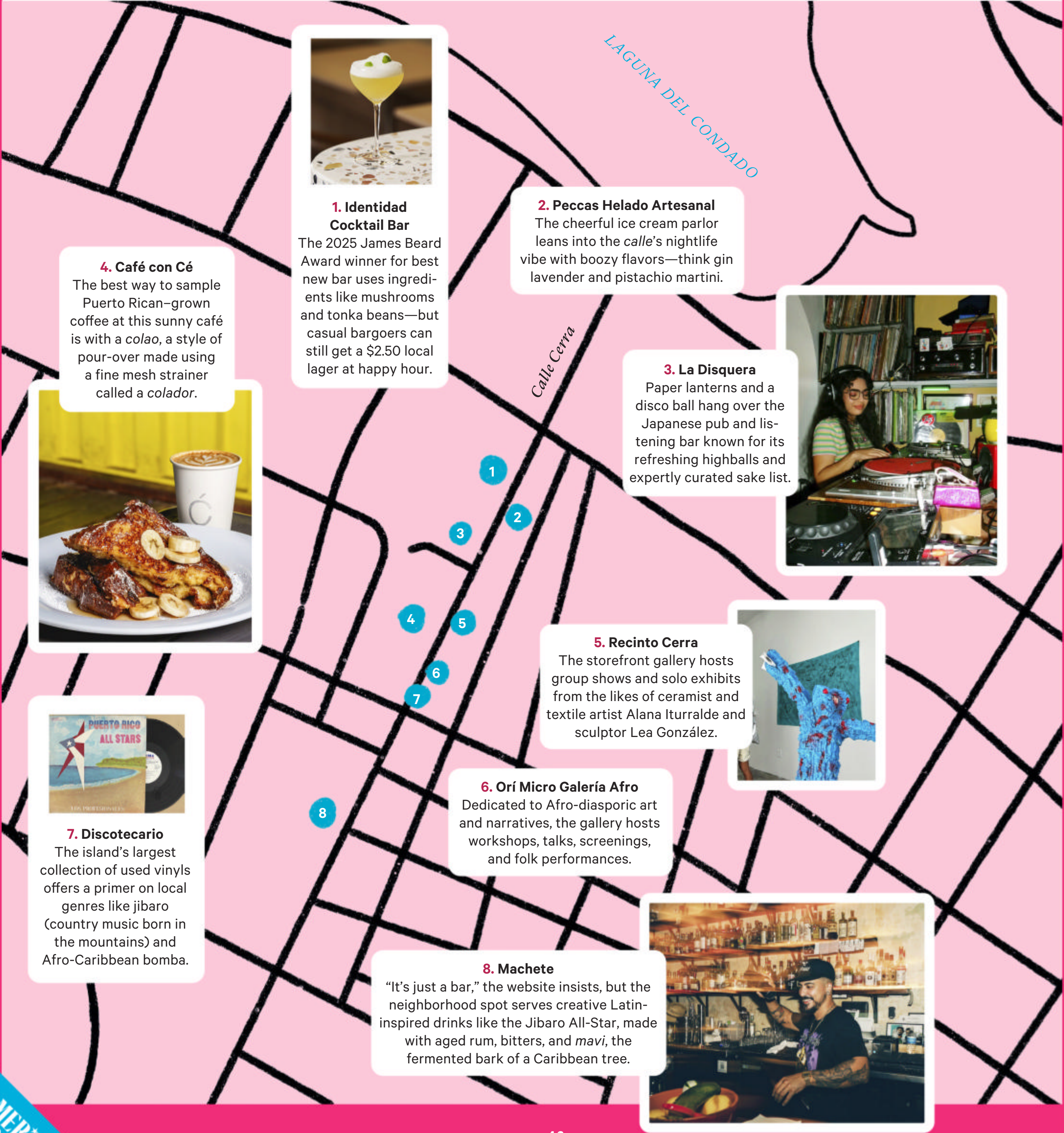
PUERTO RICO

EMBARK ON AN ARTSY COCKTAIL CRAWL THROUGH SAN JUAN'S COOLEST NEIGHBORHOOD

Located just south of beachfront Condado, Santurce is an edgy, art-filled barrio that is sometimes overlooked by visitors who stick to the tourist-friendly, colonial confines of Old San Juan. Once home to numerous salsa record labels, Calle Cerra has emerged as a nightlife and street art corridor filled with murals from the annual Santurce Es Ley festival. Here's where to eat, drink, shop, see art—and drink again. —*ND*



1. Identidad Cocktail Bar
The 2025 James Beard Award winner for best new bar uses ingredients like mushrooms and tonka beans—but casual bargoers can still get a $2.50 local lager at happy hour.

2. Peccas Helado Artesanal
The cheerful ice cream parlor leans into the *calle*'s nightlife vibe with boozy flavors—think gin lavender and pistachio martini.

3. La Disquera
Paper lanterns and a disco ball hang over the Japanese pub and listening bar known for its refreshing highballs and expertly curated sake list.

4. Café con Cé
The best way to sample Puerto Rican–grown coffee at this sunny café is with a *colao*, a style of pour-over made using a fine mesh strainer called a *colador*.

5. Recinto Cerra
The storefront gallery hosts group shows and solo exhibits from the likes of ceramist and textile artist Alana Iturralde and sculptor Lea González.

6. Orí Micro Galería Afro
Dedicated to Afro-diasporic art and narratives, the gallery hosts workshops, talks, screenings, and folk performances.

7. Discotecario
The island's largest collection of used vinyls offers a primer on local genres like jibaro (country music born in the mountains) and Afro-Caribbean bomba.

8. Machete
"It's just a bar," the website insists, but the neighborhood spot serves creative Latin-inspired drinks like the Jibaro All-Star, made with aged rum, bitters, and *mavi*, the fermented bark of a Caribbean tree.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY OF IDENTIDAD COCKTAIL BAR; COURTESY OF LA DISQUERA; LUIS LOPEZ; MARISOL PESQUERA; COURTESY OF DISCOTECARIO; COURTESY OF CAFÉ CON CÉ

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NORTH CAROLINA

EMBRACE COMMUNITY AT ASHEVILLE'S JOYOUS QUEER SPACES

Clockwise from left: Drinks at DayTrip; DayTrip owners Brandon Davis and Davie Roberts; a Filipinx crab dish at Neng Jr.'s

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: SAVANNAH BOCKUS; SARAH AND ELIAS PHOTOGRAPHY; COURTESY OF NENG JR.'S

Asheville queer-owned bar and gathering space DayTrip had been open just 32 days when Hurricane Helene hit in September 2024. "It started raining on a Wednesday, and by Friday, our building was under 23 feet of flood water," says co-owner Brandon Davis.

His story of a small-business owner affected by the widespread destruction isn't unique. What is remarkable, though, is the comeback. Less than eight months after the storm, Davis and his husband, Davie Roberts, reopened DayTrip, thanks to more than $200,000 in donations that they used to both rebuild and share with other area businesses and charities. The duo transformed a former brewery into "grandma's living room in the '70s," says Davis, complete with shag rugs, crushed velvet sofas, and vintage floral glasses.

In a time when many gay and lesbian bars across the country are shuttering, the swift reopening feels like a beacon of hope. And DayTrip isn't alone. Other queer-centered businesses around town that are holding strong include Banks Ave. Bar, the place to go for drag shows and line dancing, and the beloved dive bar Shakey's, which hosts comedy showcases, benefit parties to help others rebuild, and even pop-ups with local pickle makers.

Some spots are even slated for expansion. One of the city's buzziest restaurants is Neng Jr.'s, a James Beard–finalist Filipinx-Southern restaurant where chef-owner Silver Iocovozzi serves dishes like scallop and peach *inihaw* (barbecue) and duck adobo with coconut milk. This year, the business will grow with Harmony, a neighboring bar and bottle shop run by Iocovozzi's husband, Cherry, that will focus on natural wines.

"It's important now more than ever that we are showing that we're not afraid," says DayTrip's Davis. "More places like us are going to keep popping up." —*Shayla Martin*

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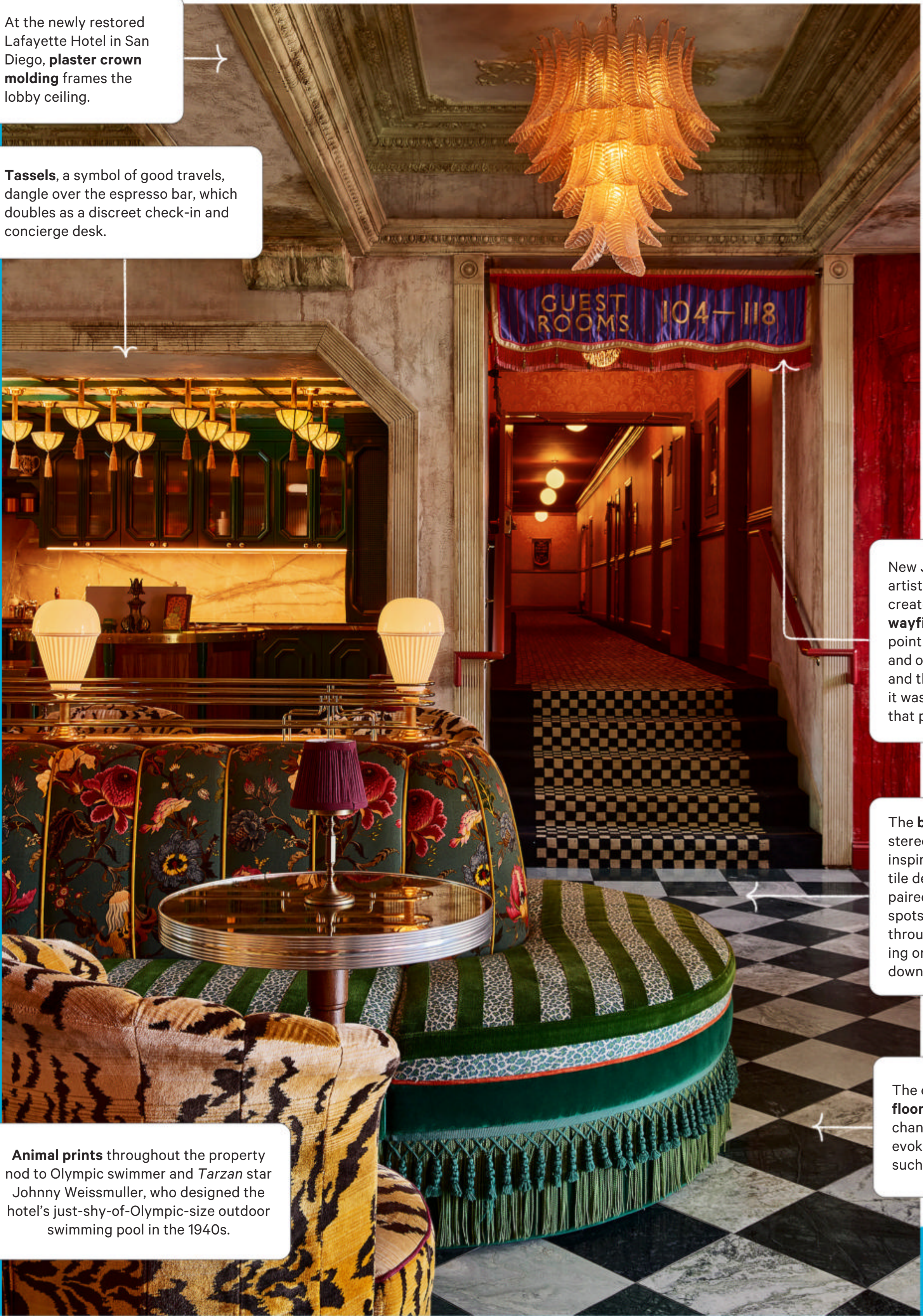
CALIFORNIA

BASK IN MAXIMALIST DESIGN TREASURES IN A REBORN SAN DIEGO LANDMARK

Need proof of maximalism's grand return? Look no further than San Diego's Lafayette Hotel. First opened in 1946, the colonial revival landmark welcomed stars including Frank Sinatra and Lana Turner, and reemerged in 2023 with new interiors replete with wildly contrasting colors and patterns. The hotel's transporting public spaces include a mid-century diner, a Oaxacan *mezcalería*, an Amalfi Coast–inspired pool deck, and a live music venue with a clamshell stage. Here's a guide to some of the quirky details guests can spot in the riotously eclectic lobby. —*ND*



At the newly restored Lafayette Hotel in San Diego, **plaster crown molding** frames the lobby ceiling.

Tassels, a symbol of good travels, dangle over the espresso bar, which doubles as a discreet check-in and concierge desk.

New Jersey–based textile artist Meghan McAleavy created the embroidered **wayfinding banners** that point guests to their rooms and other parts of the hotel—and then *remade* one after it was stolen. (They're just that popular.)

The **banquettes** are upholstered with a floral velvet inspired by 19th-century textile designer William Morris, paired with green leopard spots—a pattern that recurs throughout the hotel, including on the pool table in the downstairs bowling alley.

The checkerboard **marble floors** and Murano glass chandeliers are meant to evoke grand European hotels such as the Ritz Paris.

Animal prints throughout the property nod to Olympic swimmer and *Tarzan* star Johnny Weissmuller, who designed the hotel's just-shy-of-Olympic-size outdoor swimming pool in the 1940s.

MATT KISIDAY

VERMONT

SEEK OUT A PILGRIMAGE-WORTHY MARTINI IN A RURAL VILLAGE

Four out of five finalists for best bar at the 2025 James Beard Awards are in big cities. The last one? It's in White River Junction, a Vermont village of about 2,500 residents. A bar made from locally quarried marble is the centerpiece at tiny but mighty Wolf Tree, which attracts outsize attention thanks to its dedication to craft and use of seasonal farmed and foraged ingredients—rhubarb in spring, cranberry in winter. But it's how the team executes the basics that tells you you're in good hands. Martinis are served in frosty glasses, made with salt and orange bitters, alongside a trio of garnishes: lemon peel, house-pickled onions, and Castelvetrano olives. *—ND*

INDIANA

REV UP IN INDIANAPOLIS

After a 17-month, $60.5 million renovation, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum reopened with an additional 40,000 square feet of gallery space and a renewed focus on interactivity and immersion. "[When we] show guests what an IndyCar looks like up close, what tires feel like, and how fast pit stops are, they're more likely to feel connected to the race and become a fan," says former museum president Joe Hale. To that end, visitors can take a spin in high-tech driving simulators, while an immersive video showcases the pageantry leading up to the big race's start. *—JG*

SOUTH DAKOTA

EAT AND DRINK YOUR WAY AROUND SIOUX FALLS

The Badlands and Black Hills have a way of attracting outdoorsy types to South Dakota, but a fresh wind sweeping through the Sioux Falls restaurant scene is bringing food-loving explorers to the state's largest city as well. *Top Chef: Just Desserts* winner Chris Hanmer changed the game with the 2013 opening of his CH Pâtisserie, and the ensuing decade has seen such newcomers as BibiSol Bodega + Provisions, where chef-owner Marcela Salas (pictured) combines modern Mexican flavors with ancient Indigenous techniques. Nearby, the tropical cocktail bar Hello Hi serves concoctions like Nordern Exposure, a North-meets-South-Pacific fusion of Nordic-spiced rum, cardamom, honey, guava, lime, and the Caribbean syrup Falernum. *—ND*

OREGON

BRAVE THE RAPIDS ON A RIVER THAT'S RUSHING BACK TO LIFE

One of Oregon's many wild and scenic rivers just got a lot more wild and scenic. Last year, after decades of advocacy from Native tribes and environmental groups, four hydroelectric dams were removed from the Klamath, restoring about 45 miles of free-flowing river. Now, area outfitters have begun leading rafting trips on challenging whitewater runs (up to Class IV+) that snake between vertical canyon walls. "Having seen these places prior to dam removal, I still have to pinch myself when we run those sections," says Will Volpert, founder of Indigo Creek Outfitters, which offers one- to three-day rafting itineraries. (Other rafting operators in the region include Momentum River Expeditions and Noah's River Adventures.) "The most remarkable change was seeing salmon upstream of the [removed] Iron Gate Dam on our first few training trips. It's amazing how quickly our natural world can bounce back." *—JG*

MASSACHUSETTS

CATCH A SHOW AT A BERKSHIRES DANCE INSTITUTION

The performance space Jacob's Pillow opened in the Berkshires in the 1930s and has served as a center for boundary-breaking American dance ever since. A fire destroyed one of its three theaters in 2020, and in July 2025 the rebuilt Doris Duke Theatre opened its doors with a building that has been specially designed to integrate dance and technology: Taiwanese inventor and choreographer Huang Yi and audiovisual pioneer Ryoichi Kurokawa, for instance, collaborated on a work that melds dance, robotics, and holographic projections. Those who didn't make it to the summer festival will find year-round programming that includes pop-up performances, artist talks, and classes. *—EC*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JESSICA NOTARGIACOMO; COURTESY OF NOAH'S RIVER ADVENTURES; ALANA SNYDER; MEGAN HALEY

KENTUCKY

STAY IN A PETITE SLICE OF PARIS IN LOUISVILLE

Louisville takes its name from Louis XVI, so when Hotel Genevieve opened its doors in 2023, the designers leaned into the Francophile vibe. Named for the patron saint of Paris, the 122-room property has a banana-yellow market called the Mini Marché, guest rooms that hint at Parisian style, and a live jazz club where Josephine Baker would fit right in. This year, chef Jenner Tomaska and his wife Katrina Bravo debuted Byrdie's, an on-site, Southern-accented bistro serving such mash-ups as foie gras with apple butter and escargots with cornbread. —*ND*

MINI MARCHÉ

NEBRASKA

TAKE IN A MUSEUM WITH A MISSION

Opened in 1931 as a gift to Omaha from philanthropist Sarah Joslyn, the Joslyn Art Museum is beloved for its pink-marble art deco building, which practically glows during Great Plains sunsets. In September 2024, the museum unveiled a splashy new pavilion from global architectural firm Snøhetta, and curators shook up the collection: Once relegated to its own specific gallery, Native art now suffuses the entire place, meaning you might see a Mary Cassatt impressionist painting sharing space with beaded garments made by women on newly formed reservations, and striking portraits by Ho-Chunk artist Tom Jones among other contemporary works. "Few museums can say that they have Native art on view in every American art gallery," says curator Annika K. Johnson. "Indigenous arts are part and parcel of American art history." —*ND*

OKLAHOMA

ENJOY NOUVEAU NATIVE COOKING

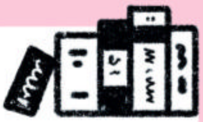
After years cooking at fine-dining spots in Tulsa, Jacque Siegfried (pictured) decided to open her restaurant, Nātv, in Broken Arrow, a suburb about 14 miles southeast of the city, in 2022. The restaurant celebrates her own Shawnee and Cherokee heritage and pays homage to the 37 other federally recognized tribes in Oklahoma. Siegfried sources local, precontact ingredients for Indigenous classics like three sisters stew (made with squash, corn, and beans) and *pashofa* (a thick soup of pork and hominy). She also creates her own inventive dishes, such as sunchoke gnocchi with mushroom *conserva* and BBQ duck wings with *wojapi* (berry sauce). —*EC*

UTAH

ADMIRE THE RED ROCKS BY RAIL

The most luxurious way to see Red Rock Country is from the climate-controlled comfort of a slow-moving locomotive. The Canadian-owned Rocky Mountaineer train chugged into the U.S. market in 2021 with the debut of the "Rockies to the Red Rocks" route, which travels between Denver and Moab with an overnight stop in Glenwood Springs. Glass-domed coaches offer panoramic views of the rugged desert landscape, which scrolls by like the reels of an old Western film. Come spring 2026, the train will rebrand as the Canyon Spirit, with an expanded three-day itinerary that continues to Salt Lake City, while the seven-day "Mighty 5 Explorer" trip pairs two days on the train with a greatest-hits bus tour of national parks: Arches, Bryce Canyon, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, and Zion. —*ND*

ALABAMA



BOOK A TRIP TO A MONTGOMERY HOTEL BUILT FOR CONTEMPLATION

In 2018, the Equal Justice Initiative, founded by civil rights lawyer Bryan Stevenson, opened the Legacy Sites in Montgomery, comprising a museum about slavery and its ongoing impact and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, a sobering tribute to the 4,400-plus victims of lynching across the U.S. This fall, they're adding to the sites with the opening of the new Elevation Convening Center & Hotel, which will feature 99 rooms and a restaurant serving reimagined Black Southern cuisine. Most important, the HKS architecture firm constructed spots designed for reflection and learning, such as peaceful gardens and a guests-only library, where they can dig even deeper into the history that necessitated the creation of these sites. —*JG*

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM RIGHT: COURTESY OF ROCKY MOUNTAINEER; NIC LEHOUX; COURTESY OF NĀTV; COURTESY OF HOTEL GENEVIEVE

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NEW YORK

SAMPLE THE FRUITS OF A BURGEONING WINE SCENE IN THE FINGER LAKES

A new crop of innovative winemakers is raising the bar in the Finger Lakes region, where unique grape varieties and low-intervention practices are increasingly replacing the sweeter wines long associated with the area.

"Compared to what I grew up thinking of the Finger Lakes, in a lot of ways it's unrecognizable," says locally born winemaker Kelby James Russell, who launched Apollo's Praise winery on Seneca Lake in 2023. "There's a flood of winemaking talent, 40 and under, that has filled the region." In addition to acclaimed rieslings (one of the area's signature wines), Russell has experimented with the little-known German grape scheurebe and is working on a lambrusco-like sparkling wine. Tastings are by appointment.

Ben Riccardi worked at wineries all over the world before returning home to start Osmote on Seneca Lake. His creations include a chardonnay and a *pétillant naturel* (a light, fizzy wine), and he's growing hybrid grapes such as aromella and marquette. Riccardi is also planting a seed to help the industry grow: Julia and Alex Alvarez-Perez, founders of Usonia winery, used his facility before opening their own space on nearby Cayuga Lake. "I can see a younger generation is really interested in hybrid wines," Riccardi says, "not just for the message of sustainability, but for how fun they are to drink."

This excitement, paired with land prices cheaper than those on the West Coast, is attracting new blood. César Vega and Louisiane Remy source Finger Lakes grapes for their Brooklyn-based natural winery, Barbichette. Michael Penn and Ria D'Aversa, meanwhile, relocated from California to start Ria's Wines, where they make minimal-intervention wines along Seneca Lake. "There's so much opportunity here," D'Aversa says.

Ithaca, which is about 30 minutes to an hour by car from many of these wineries, makes for a convenient home base. Especially lovely is the Argos Inn, an 1831 mansion with two cocktail bars; discerning oenophiles will also love the design-forward Lake House on Canandaigua, which opened in 2020 with a spa and barrel saunas. *—JG*

Clockwise from top left: Usonia owners Julia and Alex Alvarez-Perez; Apollo's Praise winemakers Julia Rose Hoyle and Kelby James Russell; Seneca Lake; Ben Riccardi crushing grapes at Osmote; a rosé from Barbichette

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ABBY QUATRO (2); MATT KAZMIERSKI; ABBY QUATRO; COURTESY OF BARBICHETTE

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(Left): A catamaran with Sail Maui embarks on an excursion off the coast of Maui, Hawai'i. (Top) A person explores the woods using an all-terain wheelchair with Power to Be in Victoria, British Columbia. (Bottom left) An Indigenous man conducts a traditional Kalapuya ceremony in Eugene, Oregon. (Bottom right) A woman welcomes guests to an international cooking class with League of Kitchens in New York City.

WEST VIRGINIA

VISIT A STATE PARK THAT'S A CLIMBERS' PARADISE

In May, West Virginia welcomed its first new state park in three decades, Summersville Lake—and it's the first in the U.S. to focus on climbing education. Access to its sandstone crags is impacted by seasonal water levels: In summer, climbers often reach the cliffs by boat and ascend right from the water; in winter, the lake gets drained. "After it dries out, you get on the lake bed and hike all the cliffs, anywhere you want," says Gene Kistler of the New River Alliance of Climbers. "Winter climbing on the lake is one of my favorite things." First-timers can rent shoes or buy gear at Water Stone Outdoors in Fayetteville and book half- or full-day private climbing trips with New River Mountain Guides. *—EC*

OHIO

SPEND THE NIGHT IN A HOUSE DESIGNED BY AN ARCHITECTURE LEGEND

Frank Lloyd Wright completists have a new building to add to their must-visit list: RiverRock House opened this March in the Cleveland suburb of Willoughby Hills—and it's available to rent for overnight stays. So what took Wright's final residential commission so long to be finished? The blueprints had just been completed when Wright died in 1959, and it wasn't until 2018 that a contractor named Sarah Dykstra bought the plans and revived the project. While there's some debate if it "counts" as a Wright house (due to the fact that he couldn't control every detail), Dykstra worked to ensure that the place looks exactly as he planned it, with some slight alterations to meet current building regulations. That means the house leans into Wright's concept of organic architecture, focusing on open floor plans, clean lines, and the use of natural materials. *—Bailey Berg*

ILLINOIS

MEET ROUTE 66'S NEW RESIDENT GIANTS

In the 1960s and '70s, the International Fiberglass Company made hundreds of huge fiberglass advertising figures—Paul Bunyan, Yogi Bear, cowboys, oversize chickens, dinosaurs—for businesses to display out front as a way to attract road-tripping families. Now, many of these larger-than-life characters, which reach up to 24 feet tall, have found a second home at the American Giants Museum, which opened in 2023 in Atlanta, Illinois (population 1,669), on Old Route 66. The museum is adding more of these "muffler men," as they were known, in preparation for next year's Route 66 centennial, which will no doubt fuel plenty of nostalgic exploration. *—EC*

IDAHO

SAIL INTO AN UNLIKELY CRUISE PORT

A land of underrated natural beauty, Idaho also has a surprising superlative: At 465 miles from the Pacific, the Port of Lewiston ranks as the West Coast's most inland seaport (meaning it can accommodate seagoing vessels). It's now a river cruise destination, too. In spring 2025, American Cruise Lines started to end many of its Columbia and Snake rivers itineraries—which retrace the path of the Lewis and Clark Expedition—at the Lewiston port; the line will split trips between Lewiston and its twin city, Clarkston, Washington, just across the river. On arrival, cruisers can taste wine at Rivaura Estate Vineyard or take a scenic helicopter ride over Hells Canyon, North America's deepest river gorge. *—ND*

THE WORLD'S GREATEST MINI BOWLER TOURNAMENT

WISCONSIN

HAVE A CHIC-MEETS-CASUAL NIGHT OUT

Few cities are better suited for a high-low night on the town than Milwaukee. Kick off the evening at the Dubbel Dutch Hotel and its intimate lounge, Agency, which bills itself as America's first fully hybrid cocktail bar. That means every drink on the multicourse tasting menu ($95) can be ordered with or without alcohol; guests indicate their choice with a two-sided, color-coded coaster, so they don't have to make a fuss about it. Across town is the 78-year-old Koz's Mini Bowl, a family-owned tavern with the last original duckpin bowling lanes in the country. Expect human pinsetters, paper scorecards, and a taxidermied lion behind the bar. *—ND*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF WEST VIRGINIA STATE PARKS; BRYAN BIRKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; MICHELLE HEIMERMAN; COURTESY OF RIVERROCK HOUSE

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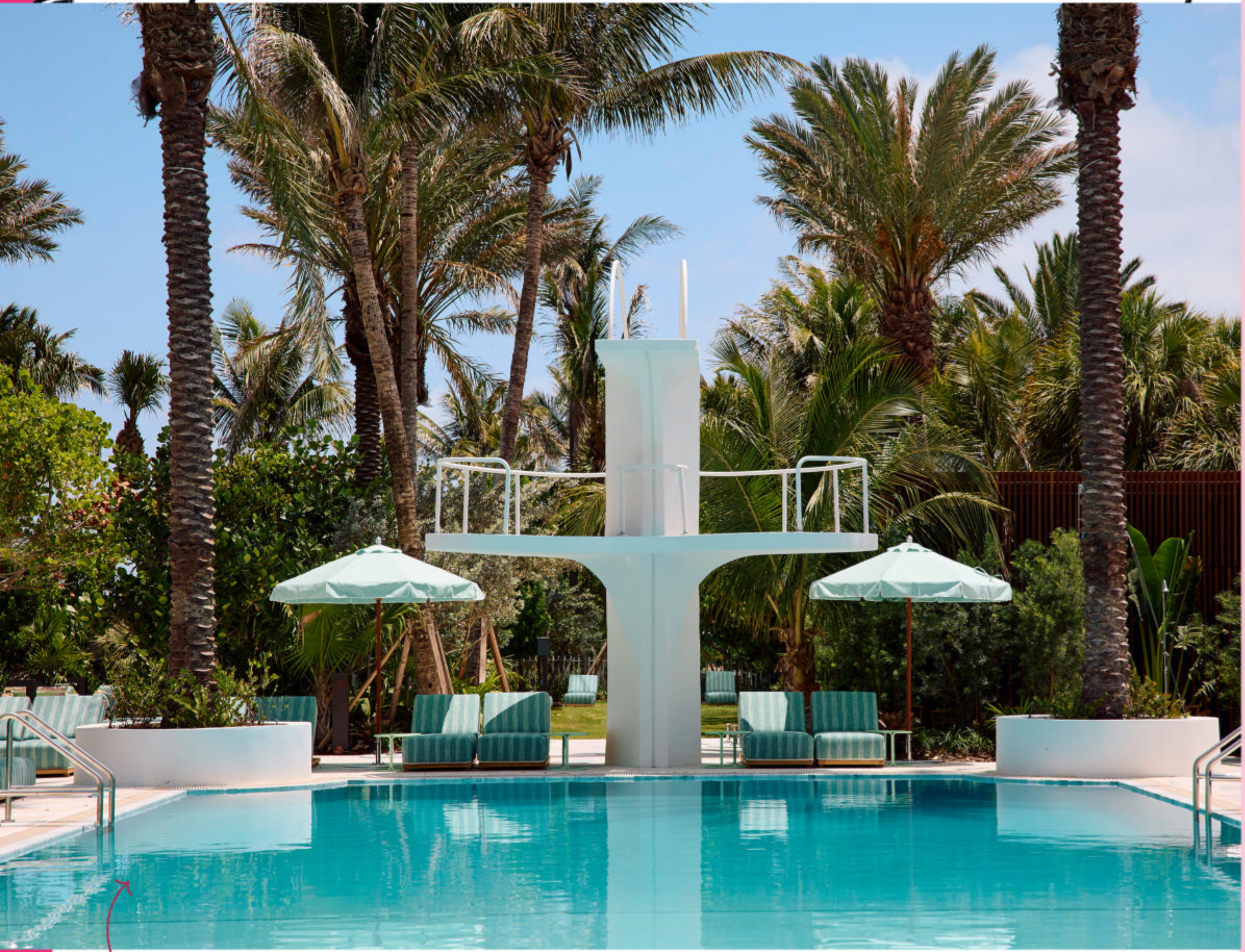
FLORIDA

CHOOSE FROM THREE HOTELS INSPIRED BY NOSTALGIC COASTAL ARCHITECTURE

Everything old is new again in the Sunshine State, where a trio of new and reimagined hotels are being born from decades-old properties—each of which perfectly represents a notable moment in 20th-century American architecture.



PATRICK CHIN

The Shelborne By Proper, Miami Beach
California-based Proper Hospitality revitalized this 1940 landmark, which straddles the line between art deco and tropical modernism. The $100 million renovation of the 251-room hotel kept in place such original elements as the mid-century diving board, but also introduced a modern seafood-forward restaurant, Pauline, from Keys native and Eleven Madison Park alum Abram Bissell.

The Vineta Hotel, Palm Beach
For its first U.S. outpost, the Oetker Collection, based in Germany, turned to this 1926 Mediterranean revival property, beloved by Palm Beach tastemakers for its pale pink facade and plant-filled courtyard. Paris-based designer Tino Zervudachi is responsible for the overhaul, which will see the number of guest rooms reduced from 57 to 41 to maximize space when it opens later this year.

Pier Sixty-Six, Fort Lauderdale
One of the finest examples of the futuristic postwar style known as Googie, this marina-front hotel debuted in 1965 on the site of the Phillips 66 Petroleum fuel dock that gave it its name. The hurricane-damaged resort reopened in January after a $1 billion (with a *b*) redevelopment, complete with its iconic revolving rooftop lounge, which now leans posh with a menu of champagne, caviar, and oysters. *—ND*

DELAWARE

DRINK INSIDE A BANK VAULT

Shaker-inspired furnishings and bold floral wallpapers liven up the interiors of the stately 1885 Romanesque bank building in Wilmington that now houses Delaware's coolest hotel, the Quoin. The 24 rooms and suites are enchanting, but the greatest riches can be found in the former vault, which once stored gold bars and furs and has now been transformed into the Simmer Down cocktail bar. Here, a mural by Reverend Michael Alan pairs midatlantic folk art styles with classic mythology and pop culture references. (Yes, that's Chaka Khan next to the UFO.) —*ND*

HAWAIʻI

GET IN THE COWBOY SPIRIT IN MAUI

In Upcountry Maui, on the northwest slope of Haleakalā, is the art-filled ranching town of Makawao, long populated by panìolos, or Hawaiian cowboys. Known for its annual rodeo and colorful clapboard buildings, it has welcomed a spate of new businesses in recent years. Among them is Makawao Public House, which serves dishes such as kanaka stew, made with invasive axis deer, sweet potato, and taro; and Upcountry Gallery, which debuted in June 2024 and displays the works of Lahaina-based artists who lost their studios in the devastating wildfire. Just down the road, visitors should stop in at Moku Roots, an organic, zero-waste farm that moved up here from Lahaina; the idyllic space offers twice-weekly farm dinners overlooking the property, outdoor harvest brunches, and a market selling vegan treats, including taro-mushroom breakfast sausage and cheese made from macadamia nut milk. —*ND*

ARKANSAS

BLAZE NEW TRAILS IN BENTONVILLE

Thanks in large part to the philanthropic arm of a local company called Walmart, the northwest Arkansas city of Bentonville has become a cultural hub, with such innovative institutions as the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and its contemporary-focused satellite the Momentary. Now, several Walton scions are flexing their monetary muscles in the direction of outdoor recreation. They've pumped millions into the development of a 70-mile mountain-biking trail network that connects to an additional 400 miles of pathways through the Ozark foothills. Visitors can rent gear at Phat Tire, Bentonville Bicycle Co., and Mojo Cycling, and there's even a roadside hotel aimed at cyclists, the Bike Inn, which has wall-mounted bike racks in each room. —*JG*

SOUTH CAROLINA

SHOP LOCAL IN CHARLESTON

A new generation of design boutiques is making it easy to re-create Charleston's craveable interiors back home. In June 2024, event designer Gregory Blake Sams opened Wentworth, which sells one-of-a-kind goods and curiosities such as Pompeii-inspired terra-cotta urns, crystal match strikers, and woven grass baskets from Cambodia. Neighborly, meanwhile, focuses on Charleston-based potters, painters, and other makers; a great souvenir from here is a Smithey cast-iron skillet, designed and crafted on a local naval base. The loveliest shop might be the Black-owned Estelle Colored Glass (pictured), which is lined with candy-hued, hand-blown stemware and cake stands. Before taking any glasses home, shoppers can try them out at the on-site mocktail bar. —*ND*

WASHINGTON

POP INTO AN INDIGENOUS GALLERY THAT LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

In September 2024, photographer Matika Wilbur (a member of the Tulalip and Swinomish tribes) opened her Seattle gallery, Tidelands, as a showcase for Indigenous creativity. Rotating exhibits include this summer's *IndigiQueer*, with works by 14 artists brought together from a wide variety of backgrounds, including Chamorro (Micronesia), Otomí (Mexico), and many from the Pacific Northwest. Tidelands also doubles as a luxury boutique featuring contemporary Indigenous designs, including Natasha Alphonse's nature-inspired ceramics, Copper Canoe Woman's "salmon ghost earrings" (pictured), and wax canvas jackets from Ginew, the only Native American–owned denim collection. —*NT*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MATTHEW WILLIAMS; CATHERINE HURT; COURTESY OF COPPER CANOE WOMAN; COURTESY OF HAWAIʻI TOURISM/TOMMY LUNDBERG

MINNESOTA

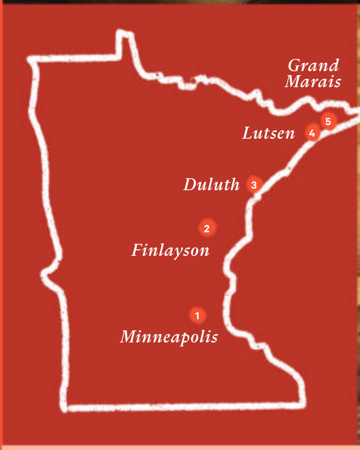
GET STEAMY ON A SAUNA-THEMED ROAD TRIP

The North Star State is home to the highest population of Norwegians, Swedes, and Finns outside of Europe. That Nordic heritage has seeped into the cuisine, the accent, and especially the love of all things sauna—dating as far back as 1915, when the state's oldest operating public sauna, Ely Steam Sauna, opened its doors. Starting in Minneapolis and heading northeast, this road trip connects some of the hottest spots in the state.

WATERSHED

SILVAE SPIRITUS

SISU + LÖYLY



SKI HILL CABINS AND SAUNAS

CEDAR AND STONE NORDIC SAUNA

1

In Minneapolis, the Hewing Hotel and the Four Seasons have rooftop saunas, while the communal **Watershed** bathhouse is known for its multipart bathing rituals. Come winter, the brave flock to **Sauna Camp** in nearby Excelsior, where the postsauna plunge takes place in holes cut directly into the ice atop Lake Minnewashta.

2

About 100 miles north of the Twin Cities, in the town of Finlayson, **Silvae Spiritus** provides a meditative retreat that offers guided forest bathing, wood-fired sauna sessions, and sound immersion therapy. Visitors can spend the night in the cozy guesthouse or the tiny house hidden away in the Northwoods.

3

Up in the burgeoning port city of Duluth, an hour's drive northeast of Finlayson, **Cedar and Stone Nordic Sauna** unveiled a floating bargelike sauna that's docked in chilly Lake Superior. The company's robust events calendar includes community cold plunges, listening parties, and marathon recovery sessions.

4

Another 90 miles northeast, within Superior National Forest (the largest east of the Mississippi), is the community of Lutsen and the newly opened **Ski Hill Cabins and Saunas**. It's a rugged yet stylish retreat to warm up weary bones after a day of winter hiking, snowshoeing, or cross-country skiing.

5

About 40 miles from the Canadian border, the artsy village of Grand Marais is home to **Sisu + Löyly** (Finnish for "stoic determination" and "steam"), which operates a stationary main sauna, America's first floating public sauna (custom-built atop a tritoon boat), and a mobile sauna that's sometimes based at an area winery. —*ND*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF WATERSHED; COURTESY OF SILVAE SPIRITUS; JENN ACKERMAN; COURTESY OF CEDAR AND STONE NORDIC SAUNA; COURTESY OF SKI HILL CABINS AND SAUNAS

VISIT
Myrtle Beach
SOUTH CAROLINA

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Soak up some sun at the **Tuna Shak**, the little brother Tiki hut to **Wicked Tuna** on the Murrells Inlet MarshWalk, and treat yourself to sushi, waterfront views and live music every night of the week. Feel like a backyard barbecue setting? Play some yard games while you wait for sticky lager chicken and craft brews at **Crooked Hammock Brewery**. Enjoy the breezy atmosphere and elevated fare at **Big Chill Island House** as you watch boats dock in the neighboring marina.

A good time is always on the menu at The Beach – come hungry.

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TENNESSEE

TUNE IN AT HI-FI LISTENING LOUNGES IN NASHVILLE AND MEMPHIS

Nashville's slinky 888 bar was designed for kicking back in style and enjoying its extensive vinyl collection.

Honky-tonks and juke joints are a classic way to enjoy a night out with music in Tennessee; as of the past few years, hi-fi listening lounges offer a sophisticated alternative. Inspired by Japanese *kissa* jazz bars, these urbane spaces feature incredible audio systems and DJs spinning records for people who value the communal experience of taking in excellent music. Opened in Nashville last September, 888 is an intimate sushi and cocktail den from the design team responsible for the Ace Hotel Kyoto, with a 2,000-strong vinyl collection and a sound system designed by renowned acoustical engineer Steve Durr, who has worked with the likes of Taylor Swift and Willie Nelson. While not technically a listening bar, the nearby Golden Sound, in the Gulch neighborhood, evokes a similar vibe thanks to its location in a repurposed 1960s-era recording studio. Over in Memphis, the Central Station Hotel is home to a vinyl collection with more than 40,000 Memphis-related songs, EgglestonWorks speakers made right in the city, and a listening lounge tucked behind the lobby bar. True audiophiles can skip the bar scene altogether and head to the Memphis Listening Lab, which opened in 2021 at the Crosstown Concourse, a repurposed Sears building from the 1920s. This public archive houses 35,000 45 rpm singles, 25,000-plus LPs, and 25,000 CDs donated by a recording studio company founder. Visitors are invited to drop by, pick up a record, and listen to it on one of their turntable stations. *—ND*

RAY DI PIETRO

ARIZONA

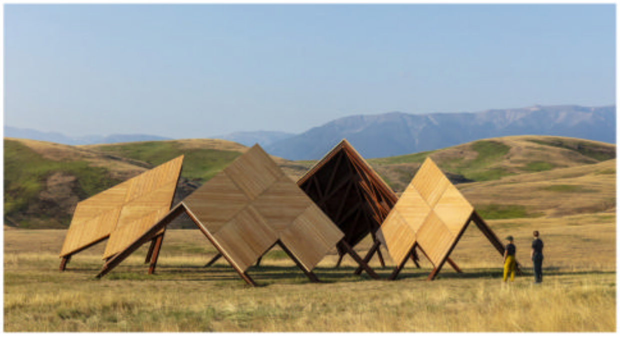
TOUR BOTH SIDES OF THE SOUTHERN BORDER

Cofounded by husband-and-wife duo Alex and Rocío La Pierre (he's American, she's Mexican), Borderlandia aims to demystify the contentious international boundary with experiences and tours that celebrate the culture, cuisine, and history found on both sides. Visitors to Tucson can join them on a quick guided walk around the city's historic districts, but to truly get immersed in the dual culture, travelers should book a longer tour, which ranges from a couple of hours to multiple days. On the American side, that might mean a stop at the mission at Tumacácori (pictured) or a hike along the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail; on the Mexican side, there are taco tastings in Nogales, visits to rural distilleries of *bacanora* (Sonoran mezcal) in the Sierra Madre, and excursions to nearly millennium-old ruins in Chihuahua. —*ND*

MARYLAND

BUY HIGH-DESIGN ITEMS AT A BALTIMORE HOTEL

It's not unusual to buy the lotion or bathrobe found in your hotel room. But what about the light fixtures or the chaise longue? At Guesthouse by Good Neighbor, a seven-room boutique hotel in Baltimore's trending Hampden area, almost everything is for sale. Owners Shawn Chopra and Anne Morgan first opened Good Neighbor as a café and shop highlighting local designers; they added a hotel in 2023 to offer travelers a chance to test out items—like a Hide Side Table by Hem (pictured) or a Kendo swivel chair—before taking them home. Community is at the core here. Chopra and Morgan have added a Design Garage where makers can work and collaborate, and they host a festival each summer that brings together design aficionados. —*EC*



MONTANA

WALK AMONG EYE-CATCHING CONTEMPORARY ART

Set on a 12,500-acre ranch just north of Yellowstone, Tippet Rise Art Center features a collection of monumental sculptures by the likes of Alexander Calder and Ai Weiwei. Last August, the campus debuted an open-air music venue, the Geode (pictured), comprising four triangular structures that reflect the music played within them as audiences take in views of the Beartooth Mountains. Those who don't snag a seat through the ticket drawing can still hike or bike through the art-filled landscape. Also new is Ursula von Rydingsvard's *Bronze Bowl with Lace*, and codirector Lindsey Hinmon is excited for visitors to "see firsthand how the sculpture's patina and hued texture reflects and merges with the surrounding grasses, sage, soil, and rocks." —*JG*

IOWA

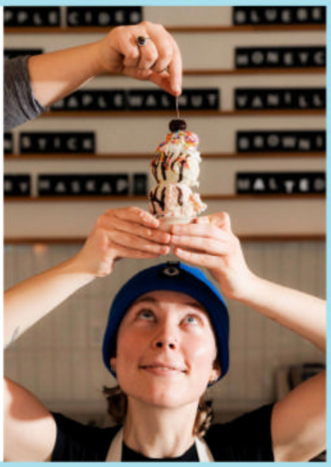
SURF A RIVER WAVE IN THE MIDWEST

It's now possible for travelers to hang 10 in the Hawkeye State: Cedar Falls sits about 950 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, but that hasn't stopped it from developing a surf scene. This spring, the college town debuted the $6.5 million Gateway River Park, transforming a sleepy stretch of the Cedar River into an aquatic playground for whitewater kayaking, fishing, tubing, paddleboarding, and surfing. Buy or rent gear (boards, life vests, helmets) at CrawDaddy Outdoors, 20 minutes away in Waverly, before tackling the rapids that give this section of the river a consistent beginner-friendly swell. —*ND*

NEW HAMPSHIRE

ORDER A CONE AT NEW ENGLAND'S COOLEST ICE CREAM PARLOR

The cone of silence around Super Secret Ice Cream has finally crumbled. Kristina Zontini began selling her hyperlocal treats in 2019 out of an old ski-tuning shed, via a private Instagram account. Now, she operates from a brick-and-mortar shop in Bethlehem, in the foothills of the White Mountains. But even before back-to-back James Beard nods, locals knew the scoop—that's because many of the ingredients Zontini uses for such flavors as sweetberry honeysuckle and strawberry baa baa (with sheep's milk yogurt) are sourced from their very own backyards. The dairy for the base comes from less than 30 miles away, and Zontini plucks the plums directly off her family's tree for a seasonal Sugar Plum Fairy flavor. —*NT*

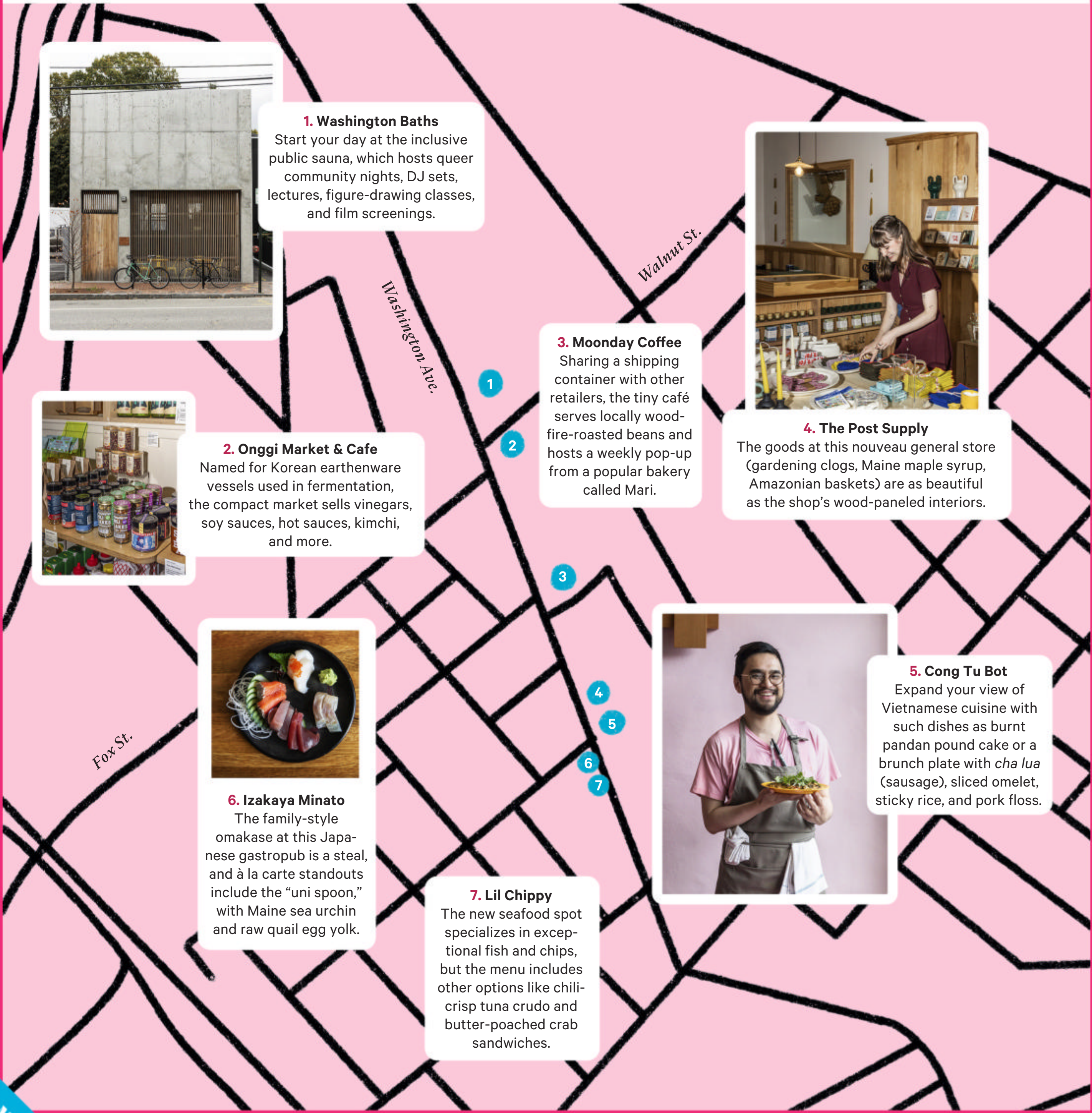


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF BORDERLANDIA; COURTESY OF GOOD NEIGHBOR; COURTESY OF TIPPET RISE ART CENTER; PHILLIP RENTON

MAINE

WANDER THE HIPPEST (AND MOST DELICIOUS) LITTLE STREET IN NEW ENGLAND

Portland is brimming with nautical charm and quaint architecture—and visitors will find very little of that on postindustrial Washington Avenue. What they will find instead is perhaps the most densely packed restaurant street in New England. Once dominated by a 1920s bakery factory, the roughly mile-long strip now houses dozens of places to eat, drink, and shop, including breweries (beer and kombucha), a gin distillery, international restaurants (East African, Salvadoran), and specialty spots dedicated to cheese, Maine oysters, and duck-fat fries. Here's how to spend a day exploring this constantly evolving thoroughfare. —*ND*



1. Washington Baths
Start your day at the inclusive public sauna, which hosts queer community nights, DJ sets, lectures, figure-drawing classes, and film screenings.

2. Onggi Market & Cafe
Named for Korean earthenware vessels used in fermentation, the compact market sells vinegars, soy sauces, hot sauces, kimchi, and more.

3. Moonday Coffee
Sharing a shipping container with other retailers, the tiny café serves locally wood-fire-roasted beans and hosts a weekly pop-up from a popular bakery called Mari.

4. The Post Supply
The goods at this nouveau general store (gardening clogs, Maine maple syrup, Amazonian baskets) are as beautiful as the shop's wood-paneled interiors.

5. Cong Tu Bot
Expand your view of Vietnamese cuisine with such dishes as burnt pandan pound cake or a brunch plate with *cha lua* (sausage), sliced omelet, sticky rice, and pork floss.

6. Izakaya Minato
The family-style omakase at this Japanese gastropub is a steal, and à la carte standouts include the "uni spoon," with Maine sea urchin and raw quail egg yolk.

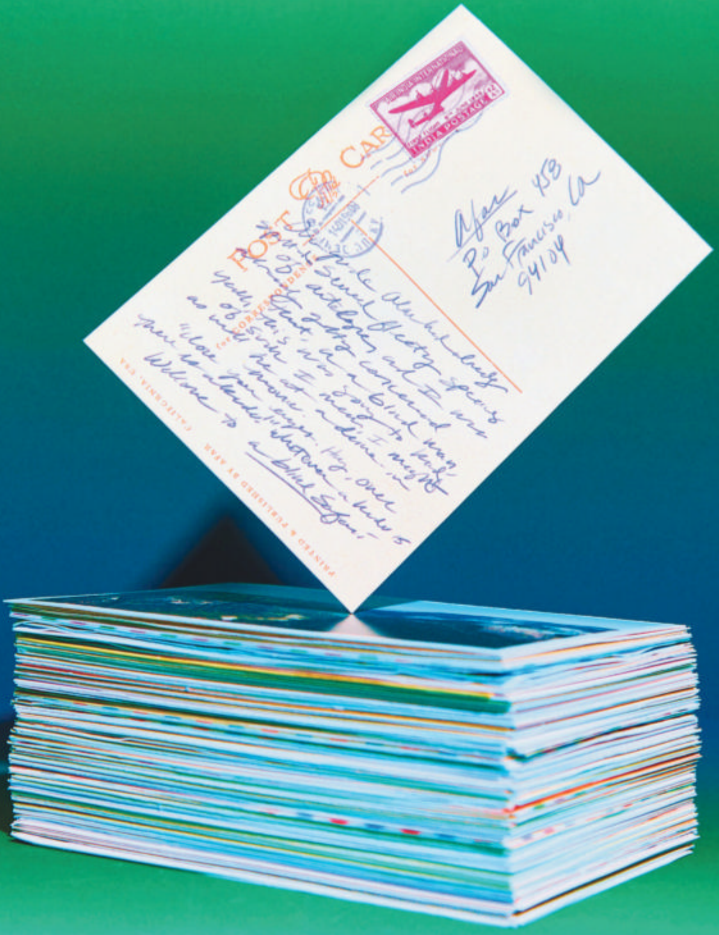
7. Lil Chippy
The new seafood spot specializes in exceptional fish and chips, but the menu includes other options like chili-crisp tuna crudo and butter-poached crab sandwiches.

GRETA RYBUS

PROMOTION

Travel Tales

AFAR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PENNSYLVANIA

GO WINERY- AND WINE-BAR-HOPPING THROUGH PHILADELPHIA

Clockwise from left: Mural City Cellars owners Nicholas Ducos and Francesca Galarus; bottles at Pray Tell Wines, which recently relocated from Oregon to Philadelphia; French-inspired bites at Chloé Grigri's new wine bar and bottle shop Supérette

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: COURTESY OF MURAL CITY CELLARS; COURTESY OF PRAY TELL WINES; ED NEWTON

Philadelphians can be a spirited bunch, and these days the hometown fervor is on full display in a once-overlooked arena. "That classic Philly pride extends to the wine community as well," says Francesca Galarus, who co-owns Mural City Cellars with her partner, winemaker Nicholas Ducos. "We're all deeply passionate about elevating the local scene and showcasing the incredible things happening in this region."

In 2021, the duo opened the city's first independent urban winery, and last year they moved into a converted auto body shop in formerly industrial Fishtown. They've since expanded their footprint to a laid-back wine garden across the street. Ducos, who trained in Napa and New Zealand, selects grapes from within a 300-mile radius and turns them into wines like pét-nat rosé and a house blend made with vidal blanc grapes grown on Lake Erie. The winery is a short stroll from Fishtown's newly opened Hôtel Anna & Bel, where the on-site restaurant Bastia has an extensive wine list that leans heavily toward bottles from Sardinia, Corsica, and Sicily.

In March 2025, Chloé Grigri—known for her natural wine bar, Superfolie—transformed a South Philly butcher shop into Supérette, a cheerful bottle shop and *bar à vin* that sells private label rosé made with pinot noir and gamay from the Loire Valley.

And don't miss Olde Kensington's standout newcomer, the urban winery and tasting room Pray Tell. Tom Caruso grew up making wine on the sidewalk with his grandfather in South Philly, before leaving the city to pursue winemaking in New York and Sonoma. He founded Pray Tell in Oregon's Willamette Valley in 2017, with labels he made himself featuring paper cutouts and collages inspired by Matisse. Last summer, he moved operations to his hometown to experiment with Pennsylvania-grown grapes. "The dream," Caruso says, "was always to do something back in Philly." —*Regan Stephens*

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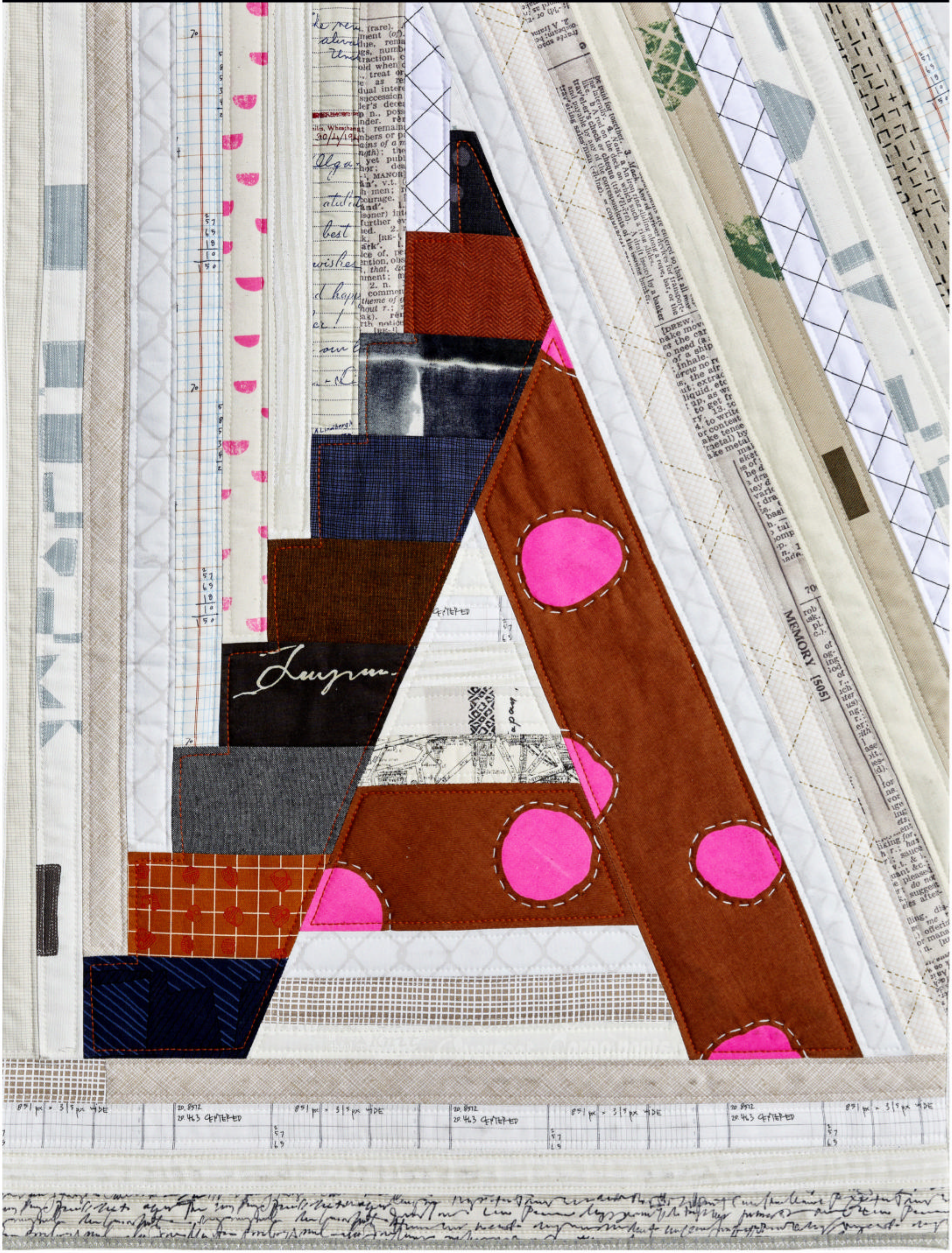

Art by **LATIFAH SAAFIR**

Fami

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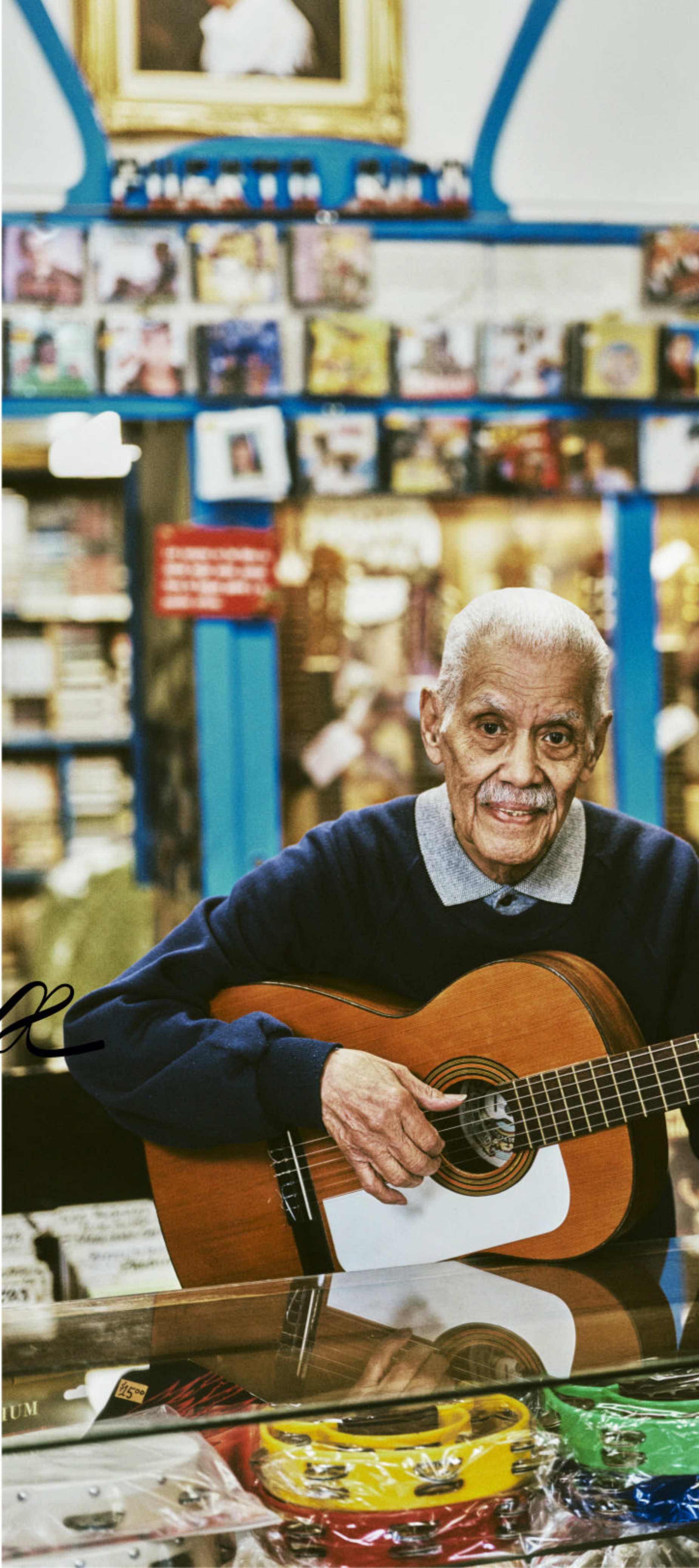
IN *celebration* OF NEW YORK CITY'S 400TH BIRTHDAY, WRITER **HARRISON HILL** *traverses* ALL FIVE BOROUGHS TO VISIT THE OLDEST SHOPS, RESTAURANTS, BARS, AND BAKERIES THAT SET *the* BIG *Apple* APART.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEX LAU

The Bronx

EST. CIRCA 1639

IN 1947, when 13-year-old Mike Amadeo moved from Puerto Rico to New York City, the Bronx hummed with the sounds of salsa, mambo, and *plena*. There were scores of music venues, from the Tritons Club to Hunts Point Palace, where Latin jazz star Tito Puente played as a young man. Today, many of the dance halls have closed—but you wouldn't know it to visit Casa Amadeo, the oldest continuously operating Latin music store in New York City. Founded in 1927



MIKE AMADEO IS AN EXPERT ON LATIN MUSIC IN THE U.S., AND CASA AMADEO FUNCTIONS AS A DE FACTO MUSEUM.

as Almacenes Hernández, the shop was rechristened when Amadeo took it over in 1969. It still operates out of the same space, barely a block away from the elevated 4/5 train.

When I visit in late spring, from the outside, Casa Amadeo appears small. But when I step inside, I need a moment to take in all the CDs, records, guitars, maps, drum sets, and T-shirts. Salsa music plays from a boom box on the counter, where Amadeo tends to a pair of customers.

More than the merchandise here, Amadeo himself is the primary draw. The son of musician Alberto "Titi" Amadeo, Mike spent a decade at Alegre Records, a seminal Latin music label, before taking over the shop. He also composed songs performed by Celia Cruz and El Gran Combo de Puerto Rico, including one of their biggest hits, "Que Me Lo Den en Vida" ("Give It to Me While I'm Alive"). It's a philosophy that Amadeo lives by, and one that reflects the energy of the borough and his place in it: The street outside the store was renamed Miguel Angel "Mike" Amadeo Way in 2014.

Amadeo is a vigorous 91 years old, with thick white hair and a charming, no-nonsense affect. He loves to leaf through books showcasing Latin music history in the United States, and on Fridays, he's known to pick up a guitar and hold concerts. When we start chatting, he shows me photos of his famous customers. "Hillary Clinton fell in love with me," he says, eyes twinkling.

Time, I suppose, is on both our minds, albeit for different reasons. I'm in Amadeo's store to celebrate, because 2025 marks the occasion of New York City's 400th birthday. Settlers founded the city around 1625, "purchasing" what is now Manhattan from the Indigenous Lenape population—though purchase is hardly the right word, given the diverging ideas about ownership, and the decades that settlers spent expelling Native communities.

I've lived in New York for 19 of those 400 years: a comparatively small amount of time on the scale of centuries, perhaps, but a substantial figure for someone in his thirties. I've long been fascinated by the city's past, by the businesses that have made it such a singular place, and how and why they endure. Casa Amadeo is my first stop in a journey that will take me to some of the oldest and most iconic establishments in Queens, Manhattan, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and the Bronx.

If the music shop is any indication, I'm in luck. Shortly before I head out, two customers enter the store to approach Amadeo for a *bendición*, or a blessing. "Lo que me vayan a dar" (what they might give me), they all then sing, as Amadeo claps, "que me lo den en vida." *Give it to me while I'm alive*.

Manhattan

EST. CIRCA 1625

CUSTOMERS ARE EQUALLY LOYAL at the original Russ & Daughters, on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, one of the oldest "appetizing" stores in the city. Joel Russ started the business after emigrating from what is now Poland, selling herring and dried mushrooms from a pushcart on Orchard Street before opening a shop in 1914. (Russ, who had no sons, added the "& Daughters" to the name after making his three daughters full partners in the business in 1935.) Inside the narrow storefront, black-and-white photos show how the establishment has changed over the years, and shelves are filled to the brim with tinned fish, dried fruit, pistachio halvah, and chocolate-covered jelly grahams.

Like the store itself, the core menu—salmon, herring, caviar, cream cheese—has stayed largely consistent over the years. But when fourth-generation co-owner Josh Russ Tupper, Russ's great-grandson, tells people he wants to innovate at Russ & Daughters, he is often met with befuddlement: *The shop has existed for a century—what needs to change?* Customers' purchasing habits have evolved over the past decades; Tupper says most visitors today buy sandwiches rather than items they can serve back at home. This is part of why Russ & Daughters remains as beloved as it is—it knows how to meet the needs of the moment while also remaining consistent. "Our innovation is indiscernible to our customers," Tupper says. There are technology updates to implement and bagel production adjustments to be made. The company has started using AI for help interpreting sales data.

Julius'
Julius'
Julius'
Celebrating with Pride Today and Every

Things are a little less cutting-edge two miles away at Julius', the oldest gay bar in the city. Founded in the mid-19th century as a grocery store in Greenwich Village, the bar retains a patina of its early years—the dim interior, wood walls, the merciful lack of *thunka-thunk* music. But in one important respect, things are different.

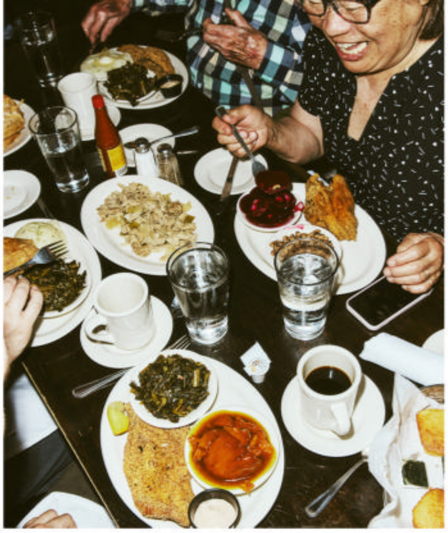
On April 21, 1966, a handful of gay men arrived at the bar to highlight state liquor regulations that effectively prohibited the assembly of gay people. It was three years before the higher-profile Stonewall Uprising, which occurred just a block away. When the men informed the bartender they were gay, he refused to serve them. The resulting publicity surrounding the "Sip-In," as the incident became known, drew attention to the rules, and, in time, helped lead to Julius's evolution into a self-identified gay bar. Today, a rainbow flag stretches across the ceiling, and a blue neon sign advertises what it refers to, winkingly, as "Gay Beer."

On the evening I stop by, Julius' is celebrating the 59th anniversary, to the day, of the Sip-In. Julius' is my favorite gay bar in the city—it's a place where you can actually meet people and get a phone number, as I myself can attest. But what else has contributed to the bar's longevity? I ask several patrons why they think it has survived all these years. "It's like our living room," one man tells me. That his observation is something of a cliché hardly makes it any less true.

WOODS SAYS THAT HER MOTHER *imagined* THE RESTAURANT AS A PLACE EVERYONE *felt comfortable,* FROM CONSTRUCTION WORKERS TO CHILDREN.

THIS PAGE: IN 2024, THE JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION AWARDED SYLVIA'S AN AMERICA'S CLASSICS AWARD, WHICH RECOGNIZES RESTAURANTS WITH "TIMELESS APPEAL."

OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP: WING ON WO & CO. SELLS EVERYTHING FROM BAMBOO MAH-JONG SETS TO GINGER JARS; IN 2022, JULIUS' WAS DESIGNATED A NEW YORK CITY LANDMARK FOR ITS ROLE IN LGBTQ HISTORY.



◇

AS I CONTINUE ACROSS Manhattan, themes of perseverance continue to reveal themselves. Success requires leaders who care about their local community, says Jake Dell, the fifth-generation owner of Katz's Deli on the Lower East Side.

Katz's also owns its space, which gives it added security in a city known for rent spikes. So, for that matter, does Russ & Daughters, as well as Wing on Wo & Co., a porcelain shop that stands today as the oldest continuously operating store in Chinatown. When I go visit, I'm dazzled by the artistry and delicacy of the plates, unsure how to pick out a gift for a friend. Here, then, is another reason why the shop has endured: It still sells excellent products.

It's a lesson I find uptown, too. Located between 126th and 127th Streets on Malcolm X Boulevard, Sylvia's is a Harlem mainstay known for its rich, flavorful soul food: candied yams, pork chops, catfish, fried chicken.

When we sit down in the dining room, second-generation executive Crizette Woods says her mother, Sylvia Woods, opened the business in 1962 thanks to a loan from her own mother, who mortgaged her farm to help realize Sylvia's dream; today, Sylvia's is the oldest Black-owned restaurant in the city. "I was almost born here because my mom didn't want to go to the hospital when she was in labor," Woods tells me. "I say I share the title of 'baby' with the restaurant."

Though younger than many of the businesses I've visited, Sylvia's stands as a model for other entrepreneurs, particularly those who have come up against the kind of barriers Black New Yorkers have faced over the course of the city's history. Woods says that her mother

DAMASCUS BREAD & PASTRY SHOP, BROOKLYN

JULIUS', MANHATTAN

BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC
Opera
LA GIOCONDA
Metropolitan Opera Company
MARCH 7, 1910
Season of 1909-1910

BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC, BROOKLYN

SYLVIA'S, MANHATTAN

EDDIE'S SWEET SHOP, QUEENS

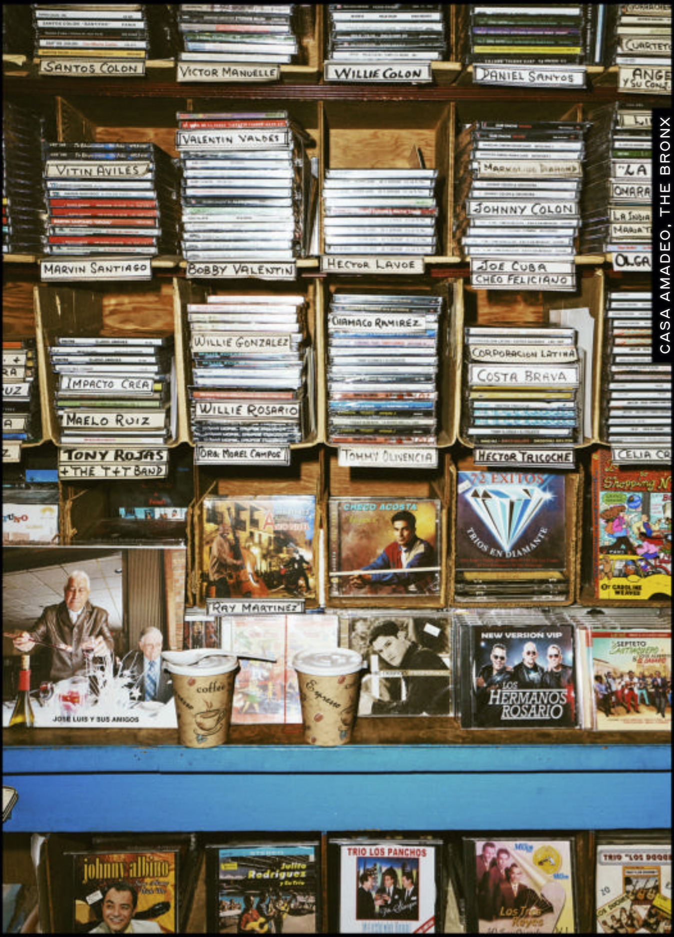
BOHEMIAN HALL & BEER GARDEN, QUEENS

NEW ASHA, STATEN ISLAND

STATEN ISLAND FERRY

Sylvia's
RESTAURANT
SOUL
FOOD

SYLVIA'S, MANHATTAN


SANTOS COLON
VICTOR MANUELLE
WILLIE COLON
DANIEL SANTOS
VALENTIN VALDES
VITIN AVILES
JOHNNY COLON
MARVIN SANTIAGO
BOBBY VALENTIN
HECTOR LAVOE
JOE CUBA
CHEO FELICIANO
CHAMACO RAMIREZ
WILLIE GONZALEZ
CORPORACION LATINA
COSTA BRAVA
IMPACTO CREA
MAELO RUIZ
WILLIE ROSARIO
TONY ROJAS
+THE T+T BAND
ORQ. MOREL CAMPOS
TOMMY OLIVENCIA
HECTOR TRICOCHE
CELIA CR
RAY MARTINEZ
coffee
Espresso
LOS HERMANOS ROSARIO
TRIO LOS PANCHOS

CASA AMADEO, THE BRONX

TO ORDER A MILKSHAKE OR AN *egg cream* HERE IS TO imagined the restaurant as a place where everyone felt comfortable, from construction workers to children to musicians performing at the Apollo, Harlem's oldest functioning theater, just 10 minutes away on foot.

The ensuing generations of the family have succeeded in carrying that vision into the 21st century. To evolve with the health needs of their most loyal patrons, they've reduced the fat and sugar content in their dishes, while also welcoming busloads of visitors from all over the world. There's also no messing with a good thing: Chicken and waffles was popularized in Harlem in the 1930s, and at Sylvia's, the dish is as good as ever. I drizzle my overflowing plate with syrup, the combination a perfect marriage of salty and sweet.

In the lobby I spot an older woman approaching a framed photo of the eponymous Sylvia, who died in 2012. The woman touches her fingers to her lips and then presses them to the photo.

"Hi, mama," she says. "We miss you."

Queens

EST. 1683

OF ALL THE BOROUGHS, Queens is the largest, so it's no surprise that it takes me more than an hour to get from my apartment in Brooklyn to Eddie's Sweet Shop, which turns 100 this year and is the oldest operating ice-cream parlor in the city. Owner Vito Citrano tells me the shop's mantra is "Have ice cream the way your grandparents had ice cream." The Citrano family took over the shop in 1968 and has been rigorous about maintaining the old-timey feel of the place and ensuring the quality of the ingredients; syrups, whipped cream, toppings, and ice creams are all made by the family on the premises. When I walk inside, I'm drawn to the centerpiece of the shop, a long white marble countertop with a line of stools. Citrano tells me that some of the metal ice-cream dishes date back decades.

When my vanilla sundae with homemade marshmallow sauce arrives, it's already dripping on the counter. As I eat, I watch an employee behind the counter reach into a vat of maraschino cherries, pluck one out, and place it onto a sundae with the delicacy and precision of a chef at a Michelin-starred restaurant. Behind him stands an old white refrigerator like something out of a Jimmy Stewart movie; next to it stretches another white marble counter crowded with menus, cones, coffeepots, paper cups, sugar shakers, a cash register—markers of a long-standing business that knows a thing or two about success. To order a milkshake or an egg cream here is to step back in time, I think: to enter a bygone era that is, thanks to a century's worth of effort, not in fact bygone at all. Eddie's reminds me just how potent a force nostalgia can be.

Before leaving Queens, I stop by the Bohemian Hall & Beer Garden in Astoria, the oldest beer garden in New York City. Founded in 1910 as a meeting place for Czech immigrants, Bohemian Hall is still owned and managed by the Bohemian Citizens' Benevolent Society of Astoria, whose aim is to support and share Czech and Slovak culture. For decades the organization did just that, with the beer garden serving as a community space to drink, eat, play chess, and see Czech plays.

But by the 1990s, business had slowed, and the organization took on debt. Faced with the possibility that Bohemian Hall could be auctioned off, local groups banded together to fight for its survival. Those efforts helped turn the business back into the meeting spot it is today—proof of just how essential community investment can be.

I order a lager and carry the overflowing mug to my seat at a picnic table in the sun-filled courtyard. I'm there on a weekday afternoon, and the place is full of families. Kids kick a soccer ball, and strollers are parked among the trees.

At one time, there were 800 beer gardens in the city; today, Bohemian Hall is one of the last of its kind. "You don't find too many places like this," a happy drinker tells me.

THIS PAGE: BOHEMIAN HALL & BEER GARDEN OFFERS PRIMARILY CZECH AND GERMAN BEERS ON DRAFT.

OPPOSITE PAGE: SOME ICE-CREAM DISHES AT EDDIE'S SWEET SHOP ARE ORIGINAL, AS ARE THE FLOORS AND CEILING INSIDE THE SPACE.

Staten Island

EST. 1661

THE LEAST populated of the five boroughs, Staten Island is most often a brief stop for visitors riding the Staten Island Ferry to and from Manhattan for a peek at the Statue of Liberty. On the day I arrive, Viji Devadas, co-owner of New Asha restaurant, welcomes me with the cheery hospitality of a beloved aunt. Under the green and yellow awning of the eatery, she motions me inside to the fridge, where I select a fresh passion fruit juice and sit down at a Formica table. Established in 2000, New Asha is relatively young compared to some of the institutions I've visited on this quest. But it is one of the oldest Sri Lankan restaurants in a vibrant area known as Little Sri Lanka, which has a population of some 5,000—one of the highest concentrations of Sri Lankans in the country.

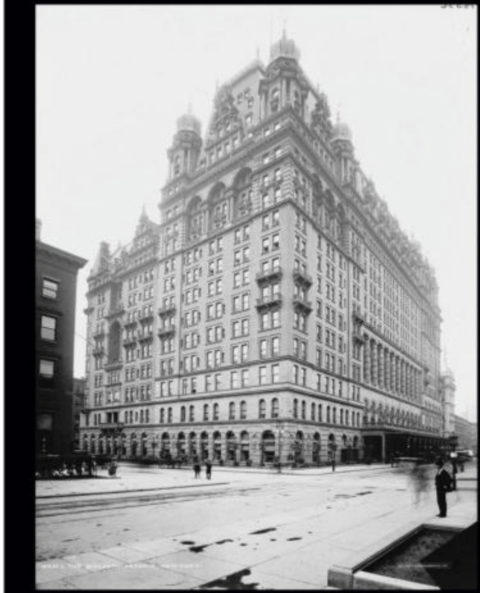
Devadas's husband and her brother, Subhas Ramakrishan, were the ones to conceive of New Asha, inspired by the siblings' grandparents' restaurant in Sri Lanka. In Staten Island, visitors have become loyal "because it's like a home," Devadas says. "We don't treat people like customers, we treat them like family. That's the key."

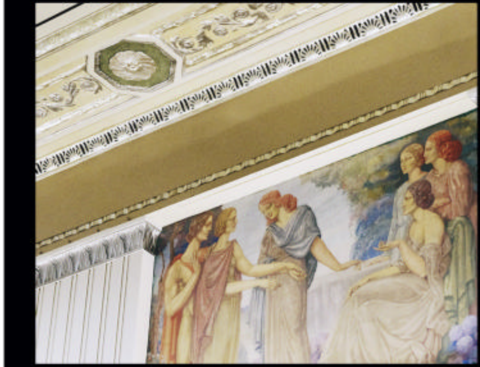
Ramakrishan calls me to the kitchen. On a huge griddle he scatters onions, oil, carrots, leeks, and chopped roti, topping it all off with an egg and coconut sauce. This is *kottu* roti, he tells me, a quintessential Sri Lankan dish. After a few moments, he hands me a steaming plate. The dish is chewy and forward with spice, and as I eat, Ramakrishan nods, smiling.

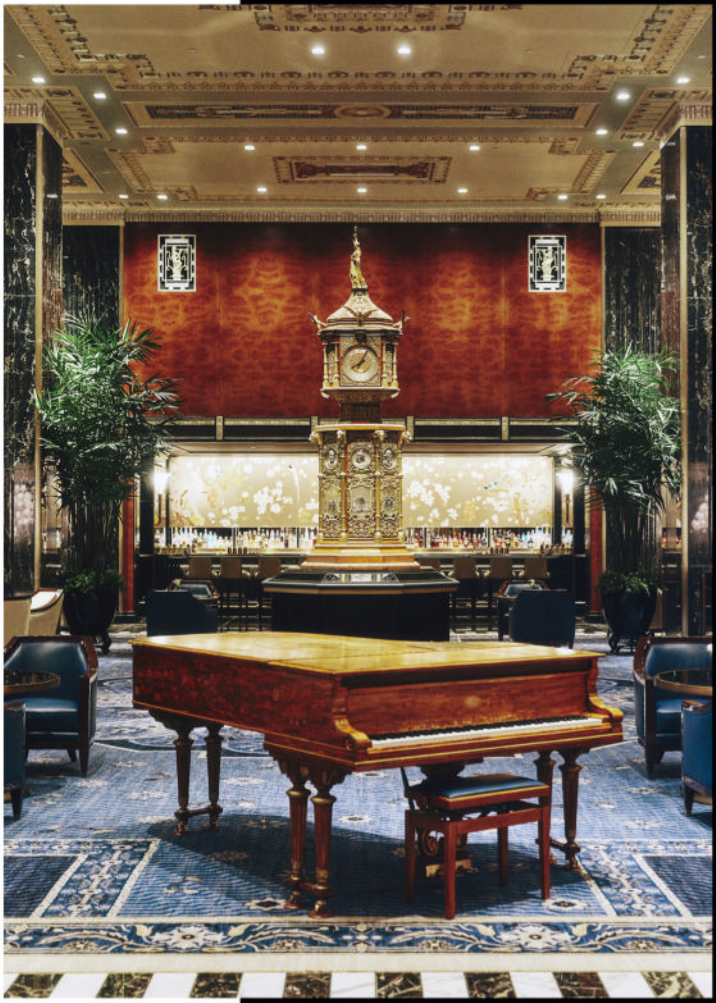
Home is also a major theme 20 minutes away at Basilio Inn, the oldest operating restaurant on Staten Island, which I visit after saying goodbye to Ramakrishan and Devadas. (It dates back to 1921.) Owner Maurizio Asperti tells me he knows "98 percent of the people that come here." He waves at a customer walking by. "I knew this woman when she first got married." When I sit down for pappardelle with fresh tomatoes and goat cheese, a woman gestures at an empty table where a placard with a name on it indicates the next reservation. "They're always here," she says. "Seven o'clock." In a city where people often don't know their neighbors, I think, it feels good to be known.

THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: THE WALDORF ASTORIA'S EARLIER ITERATION CIRCA 1900; A RESTORED FRESCO; THE NEWLY RENOVATED PEACOCK ALLEY

OPPOSITE PAGE: VIJI DEVADAS (LEFT) OPENED NEW ASHA WITH HER FAMILY. THE RESTAURANT IS KNOWN FOR ITS HOPPERS, BOWL-SHAPED PANCAKES MADE FROM FERMENTED RICE FLOUR.







HERITAGE ART/HERITAGE IMAGES VIA GETTY IMAGES

AN ICON, *Reborn*

The Waldorf Astoria is one of New York's most historic hotels. After years, it's finally reopening.

BY JENNIFER FLOWERS

◆

WHEN THE WALDORF ASTORIA New York opened on Park Avenue in 1931, it didn't take very long for it to become a benchmark for luxury hospitality in Manhattan. The hotel—a 1,400-room art deco masterpiece taking up an entire city block—was the first in the world to have electricity on every floor. Ginger Rogers performed in the chandelier-lit Empire Room, well-heeled diners tucked into eponymous Waldorf salads, and former president Dwight D. Eisenhower lived out the last years of his life here.

In 2017, the hotel closed for a much-needed overhaul. After shaking off years of dust and patchwork additions that allegedly cost billions, the Waldorf Astoria New York—part of Hilton Hotels & Resorts' luxury portfolio—is poised to make its comeback, and is accepting reservations beginning September 1.

Led by the architecture firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and French interior designer Pierre-Yves Rochon, the project revitalized both the Waldorf's guest rooms and its officially landmarked public spaces, including the Park Avenue Lobby, the Grand Ballroom, and the Silver Gallery. Artisans specializing in traditional techniques restored art deco motifs, handpainted frescoes, and delicate silver leaf accents.

"It's been a long journey," says Rochon, who worked on the property for nearly eight years. "If you look at other hotels in New York, there's nothing else like this. We respected all the original architecture of the public spaces, and we even discovered some columns. We designed the rooms with modern travelers in mind: entirely new bathrooms, and walk-in dressing rooms that weren't there before."

The number of guest rooms and suites has gone from 1,400 to 375 (with an additional 375 private residences), allowing for sprawling sanctuaries with marble vanities and deep soaking tubs.

Also in the works are a new 30,000-square-foot spa and a restaurant by chef Michael Anthony of Gramercy Tavern. Jeff Bell, behind Manhattan's beloved PDT bar, is creating the cocktails for the bar in the famed Peacock Alley passageway.

Jasmin Howanietz, the hotel's executive director of sales, worked at the Waldorf Astoria New York for close to 12 years and became the first employee to return two years ago. She says that watching travel advisors finally get a look at the renovations has been exciting.

"I let them walk up the Park Avenue steps and I literally see jaws drop," she says. "We've had people clap, we've had people get emotional, because they don't know what happened behind the facade for all these years."

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All Our Pies Are Freshly Baked Every Day & Refrigerated!
Delicious & FRESH!!
Spinach Pie
Spinach & Potato
Spinach & Feta
CHICKEN, MEAT
VISA
Cash Prices & Card Prices for all goods and services
DAMASCUS BAKE

I HAVE BEEN TRAVELING ALL OVER, SAMPLING THE CITY'S *best* PASTRAMI, THE *best* BEER, THE BEST BAKLAVA.

Brooklyn

EST. 1645

FINALLY, I EXPLORE THE BOROUGH I call home: Brooklyn. Inside Damascus Bread & Pastry Shop, the mood is cheery. Opened in 1930 in Brooklyn Heights, it is the oldest pita shop in New York City, one of many specialty stores that once lined Atlantic Avenue, a hub for immigrants from Syria and other Arab countries. Sahadi's, next door, opened in 1948, and Yemen Café, across the street, in 1986. As I wander by the bags of fresh pita and stacked boxes of dates, customers crowd the counter, buying lentil soup, pistachio nougat, and squares of honey-soaked baklava, which I will eventually order to go.

I eat a few bites on the 15-minute walk back to my apartment. As I stroll down the street, traffic grinding by, I consider New York's greatest gift: proximity. For these past several weeks, I have been traveling all over, sampling the city's best pastrami, the best beer, the best baklava, all of it brought to life by people with craft and care. It occurs to me that they, more than whatever is flashy and new, are what we're really celebrating this year, for they are what make New York *New York*. They make a city a home—for New Yorkers past, present, and for the centuries to come. Ⓐ

THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: BROOKLYN ALSO USED TO BE SPELLED BREUCKELEN, BREUCKLYN, BREUCKLAND, BRUCKLYN, BROUCKLYN, AND BROOKLAND; FERRY ROUTES—SOME FREE—CONNECT NEW YORK CITY'S FIVE BOROUGHS.

OPPOSITE PAGE: SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR ORDERS AT DAMASCUS BREAD & PASTRY SHOP INCLUDE SPINACH PIE AND TAHINI BREAD.

Writer Harrison Hill is profiled on page 12. Alex Lau photographed Chinatowns for Afar's Summer 2022 issue.

WHERE THE LAKE MEETS THE SKY

WITH MORE STATE PARKS AND SHORELINE THAN ANY OTHER COUNTY IN WISCONSIN, DOOR COUNTY IS ONE OF THE MIDWEST'S BEST-KEPT SECRETS.

BUT THANKS TO A NEW GENERATION OF CREATIVES, IT WON'T STAY THAT WAY FOR LONG.

BY *EMMA JOHN*, PHOTOGRAPHS BY *CHRISTINA HOLMES*

G

GROWING UP IN POLAND, Krzysztof Krol loved pierogi. But he had no idea that the dumplings would be such a hit in Door County, in northeast Wisconsin. "There are 10 Polish speakers in the whole region," he tells me. "Still, on our first day [of business], we sold out by 2 p.m."

That was five years ago, when Krol, now 34, opened his food stand, Prince of Pierogi, in the village of Ephraim, near Peninsula State Park. Today we're sitting in his second brick-and-mortar restaurant in the town of Sturgeon Bay, where he employs a team to fill dough with meat, cheese, and potatoes and hand-pinch their frilled edges. "You know who works for me? A couple of 70-year-old ladies. They're looking to stay active, and they're amazing."

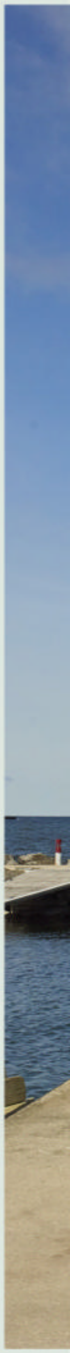
Retirees are not an anomaly in Door County. A quiet peninsula geographically isolated from the rest of the state, it sticks up into Lake Michigan like a thumb, roughly 150 miles from Milwaukee, Wisconsin's biggest city. It has just 30,500 permanent residents, but every summer, 2.5 million holidaymakers swell that number, the vast majority coming from Chicago or cities in Wisconsin.

Among Door County's attractions are tree-lined beaches, quaint small towns, and picturesque orchards that produce nearly all the sour cherries in Wisconsin. Its five state parks—more than in any other county in the state—include Newport, the second Dark Sky Park designated in the Midwest; there are also 34 islands and 11 historic lighthouses. Owing to these charms, Door County is often called the "Cape Cod of the Midwest."

Krol first visited the area on a work and travel cultural exchange program in 2012, starting as a housekeeper, then bagging groceries, waiting tables, and serving ice cream. "Coming here for the first time I just knew, *you have to make this your second home*," he says. "It's secluded, it's different, and the nature is world-class."

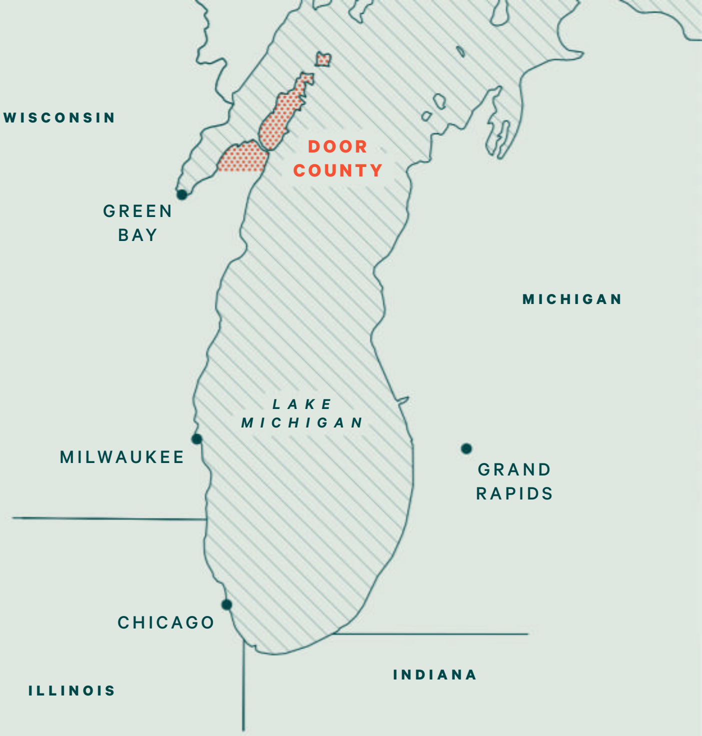
I had my reasons for visiting Wisconsin, too. I suspect few Brits like me would be able to point to it on a map, but I knew exactly where it was: I had visited 42 states and was on a mission to reach the rest. Aware that Wisconsin is America's Dairyland, I pictured long drives through gentle farmland and visits to conservative communities.

When I heard about Door County, it was the promise of its beauty that most appealed to me. Here, I thought, was far more natural diversity than I expected of the Midwest. There were rumors, too, from friends who had been there, of another kind of diversity. Young people moving to the area. LGBTQ pride flags in the streets. Intrigued, I flew to Milwaukee from London and drove three hours north, the shore of Lake Michigan hovering in and out of view.



Clockwise from top left: Pierogi and a cabbage roll at Prince of Pierogi; Sister Bay; pizza preparation at Inland; the Dörr hotel; Seaquist Orchards in Sister Bay

Pages 80–81: View from the Washington Island ferry



WITH A POPULATION of 10,000, Sturgeon Bay is Door County's largest town, and the gateway to the region. I head across its sweeping harbor bridge, past lines of boats, to reach the downtown. I pass art galleries, candy stores with red-and-white-striped awnings, shop fronts filled with soaps and fancy kitchenware. But there are hints of something a little less traditional. A bookseller promotes banned books you won't find in the state's schools and libraries. A 19th-century chapel has been converted into an eatery and wine bar.

Later that evening, I walk into that wine bar, Drömhus, to meet Cathy Grier. A blues musician who grew up in Connecticut, Grier spent the mid-1980s gigging in Key West and the aughts busking in New York City. A songwriting gig brought her to Sturgeon Bay in 2016, and she was taken by the thriving arts scene, from a recording studio run by a Grammy-nominated producer to a progressive theater company operating out of a state park.

What she didn't find was a visible LGBTQ community. "People didn't share their lives publicly. Some felt they were safer keeping their lives private," she says. "But I didn't want to be in the closet. I couldn't live here if I couldn't be normal." In 2016 she set up Open Door Pride, which runs year-round events. Grier remains in awe of the support she receives for her Pride Festival, which takes place each June. "I've never lived anywhere like it," she says. "If you ask for help, people always show up."

Her friend Claudia Scimeca says that's just what's known around here as "Midwest kind." "We look at people on the street and we're not uncomfortable greeting them. We smile a lot. We also apologize for a lot of things." I tell Scimeca that last part is a British trait, too. "Oh is it?" she says. "I'm sorry."

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NOWHERE IS MORE than an hour-and-a-half drive in Door County—if it were, you'd be in the water. At the end of the night I leave the wine bar and head 30 miles north to Sister Bay. I'm staying at the Dörr hotel, where Scandinavian-minimalist interiors reflect the new spirit afoot.

The next morning, I visit Peninsula State Park on a promontory just a few miles south—a peninsula on a peninsula. Krol had recommended it the day before, and I quickly see why. As I wind cautiously around its perimeter road, a doe bolts out of the undergrowth. A few seconds later, her baby follows, rushing to catch up and tripping over its feet so its limbs splay every which way.

BUT THE WHITE CHURCHES AND HALLMARK MOVIE AESTHETIC ISN'T THE ONLY STORY HERE.

I like the park even more when I discover its clifftop lookout, Eagle Tower. A recent rebuild is the third iteration of the observation platform that has stood here since 1914, now with a canopy walk as an accessible alternative to its 100 steps. I look and see the waters of Lake Michigan stretching out before me, waves lapping gently against the shoreline.

What I don't see—anywhere—are many chain hotels, billboards, or large lakeside developments. Door County has insulated itself from mass commercialization for decades, a big part of its appeal. Its small-town Americana charm is encapsulated in Ephraim, which I reach in just a few minutes' drive from the park. The signage on Wilson's Restaurant & Ice Cream Parlor still advertises fountain service like it's a novelty.

But the white churches and Hallmark movie aesthetic isn't the only story here. There are new faces, and new enterprises, coming to town. I saunter along the road to a run of microbusinesses operating out of what were once holiday chalets. At Anatolia Cuisine DC, Mukhtar Aghazada offers falafel and *kofta*, the kinds of dishes his family serves at their own restaurants back home in Azerbaijan. In 2024, his restaurant's first year, Aghazada was so busy that for three months he couldn't even take time off to get a haircut. "I had to ask my girlfriend," he says, running his hand over his head. "It wasn't that good."

We sit in the tiny dining room, eating fragrant, sticky baklava and washing it down with tea. Aghazada came to Fish Creek on a cultural exchange program, and stayed to study for an

From left: More than a million people a year visit Cave Point County Park to see its limestone ledges and underwater caves; besides bowling, Earl's Sister Bay Bowl is known for its old-fashioneds and fish fry.

ANATOLIA
...ANEAN CUISINE

PIONEER STORE

Clockwise from top left: Mukhtar Aghazada, owner of Anatolia Cuisine DC; Amy and Eric Gale of Anchored Roots Vineyard & Winery; Pioneer Store in Ellison Bay was originally built in 1900; the Baileys Harbor Range Lights were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989.

MBA at Illinois State University. It was Krol who originally told him the unit near his Ephraim shop was becoming available.

Steps away at Rusty Dusty Vintage & Records, Adam Pokorski also moved to the area to start a new business. A portrait of Greta Thunberg hangs on the outside wall; inside, eclectic wares—T-shirts, vinyl, VHS tapes—are arranged with Pokorski's own memorabilia along the timber walls. He is originally from Green Bay but lived most of his adult life in Northern California before his wife suggested they move here, which they did in 2017.

As I travel around the county I meet others with similar stories. There's Mattea Fischer, whose sourdough bakery Cultured attracts an 8 a.m. line for bagels and focaccia. Fischer grew up in Pennsylvania and had been working on an urban farm in Milwaukee and rural farms outside of Green Bay before a friend introduced her to Door County; she opened a permanent home for her bakery, previously a pop-up, in 2023. Sourdough is also a key ingredient at Inland, a pizza shop opened by two couples in Baileys Harbor in September 2024.

Then there's Ben Joseph: He quit life as a lawyer to open Zeke's Village Market in Sister Bay. I meet Joseph in the indie-shopping hub of Fish Creek, where his new store sells funky Wisconsin-themed apparel. (My purchase: a yellow sweater emblazoned with the word "Cheese.")

Eric and Amy Gale, both in their 30s, returned home to Wisconsin in 2020 and planted their first vineyard before opening Anchored Roots winery in 2022. One afternoon, I visit their tasting room, turning away from the water to the farmland that makes up much of the peninsula's interior. The first bottle I try is their ledge blanc, a mineral-y, melony white that reminds me a little of a sauvignon blanc, which it's not. It's made from a blend of hardy grapes—itasca, frontenac, and la crescent—bred for cold climates by the University of Minnesota, and still relatively unknown.

Eric follows it with a more experimental pour, a frontenac blanc that balances the grape's bracing acidity with a creamy oak finish. (Even Eric describes it as "totally outside the box.") He and Amy met at college in De Pere, Wisconsin, then spent years working in viticulture in Washington state. "We could have continued to make great cabernet sauvignon and riesling out there," he says. Instead, the couple preferred to help build Wisconsin winemaking from the ground up.

The industry here is still very young—"probably where Washington was in the 1970s," Eric says—but the Gales are determined to help bolster its reputation. While many winegrowers opt for warmer, sunnier climates, it was Door County's comparative coolness that appealed. The lake acts as a climate buffer, meaning spring comes late, so there's less chance of unexpected damaging frosts. And as climate change brings more erratic and extreme weather, the vineyard is well positioned.

* * *

I GET A TASTE OF the peninsula's unique topography the next day as I drive 10 miles south from Sister Bay to Baileys Harbor. The vegetation seems to come in waves: banks of trees, explosions of balsam fir and white spruce, sudden marsh. My journey ends at the Ridges Sanctuary, a private, not-for-profit nature reserve created in 1937 to protect Door County's most sensitive ecosystem. The first site in Wisconsin to be dedicated as a National Natural Landmark, its programs extend from guided hikes and kids' camps to volunteer conservation work.

Katie Krouse, the first woman executive director in the sanctuary's history, takes me around its five-plus-mile trail, pointing out some of the endangered species surviving here: pink-veined orchids, Hine's emerald dragonflies. We pause to take in various scents, from the spreading skirts of the Canadian hemlock to the wintergreen and juniper we're crushing underfoot. This boreal forest—the southernmost in North America—is one of the most biologically diverse habitats in the entire Midwest.

But the warming climate is already having an impact on it. Ash trees and white birch are dying off as rising temperatures make them vulnerable to both extreme weather and invasive species. The sanctuary is engaged in critical research to learn how best to preserve the environment, whether that's planting more trees or identifying the ideal conditions for a ram's-head lady's slipper orchid. "The landscape is going to change significantly," says Krouse, who points out that as temperatures rise farther south, Door County will also attract an increasing population of climate migrants. "And that puts a lot of pressure on the environment."

* * *

"IN A SAD WAY," says Jeff Lutsey, climate change will only make Door County more popular, because it will make the summers longer and the seasons won't be as hot as other destinations. In 2022, Lutsey was named the first salaried director of the Climate Change Coalition of Door County, which advises local businesses on everything from tree planting to energy-efficient construction. His team is working on building greater resilience around the county, both in its economy and its infrastructure. It's in this context that he suggests I visit Jeannie Kokes, 82, who runs one of the oldest hotels on Washington Island.

Door County's largest island sits off the tip of the peninsula and measures just 35 square miles. Every local I meet speaks fondly of it: "It's like a vacation from your vacation," Lutsey says. "You think coming to Door County is going back in time? In Washington Island it feels like they only just got cars."

And so, on the final day of my trip, I take the cartoonishly winding road north to the ferry pier. The half-hour crossing is windy but smooth, for which I'm grateful. A fellow passenger tells me that so many ships were wrecked in this navigational passage during the 17th and 18th centuries that they still call it Death's Door.

Kokes, an energetic force bundled in a windbreaker, meets me on the other side, with a plan to drive me around and introduce me to a few of the local residents. (There are only 780 in total.) Kokes's own grandparents were regular visitors to the island from the 1920s and first brought her

THE AFAR GUIDE TO

DOOR COUNTY

With 300 miles of shoreline, 34 named islands, supper clubs, and five state parks, Door County is a special slice of Wisconsin.
By Katherine LaGrave

WHEN TO GO

Door County's high season begins in May, when apple and cherry trees bloom, and dwindles in October after peak fall foliage; visit in June or September to avoid the heavier crowds. Nowhere is more than an hour-and-a-half drive in the peninsula, making it suitable for a long weekend (3–4 days) or a more leisurely week. Note that many places are only open seasonally, so be sure to check with specific properties about hours before visiting.

HOW TO GET THERE

By car, Door County is four hours north from Chicago, five hours east from Minneapolis, and about three hours from both Madison and Milwaukee. The closest airport, Green Bay Austin Straubel International, is roughly an hour from Sturgeon Bay, which is the county's largest city.

WHERE TO STAY

When it opened in Sister Bay, 45 minutes north of Sturgeon Bay, in spring 2021, the **Dörr** was the first new hotel in the town in 20 years. The boutique property's 47 rooms and suites nod to the area's Scandinavian heritage, and feature a minimalist design aesthetic, with white shiplap walls and custom white oak furnishings. The hotel is right across the street from Sister Bay's beach and walking distance to 14 bars and restaurants, including Door County Creamery, known for its artisanal cheeses, and Al Johnson's, a family-owned Swedish restaurant housed in a log cabin with a sod roof.

For something quieter, take the ferry to Washington Island. In the stately **Hotel Washington**, dating to 1904, eight carefully restored rooms feature hand-carved beds and organic linens, and guests share two bathrooms. For a little more privacy, a cottage suite in the backyard has its own bathroom and outdoor space. Yoga studio space is available, and the hotel's farm-to-table restaurant offers seasonal menus that center island produce.

WHERE TO EAT AND DRINK

In the town of Ephraim, Mukhtar Aghazada brings dishes from his Azerbaijan homeland to **Anatolia Cuisine DC**, which opened in 2024. You can't go wrong with the falafel, *kofta* (meatballs), and baklava. The nearby **Prince of Pierogi** restaurant, run by Poland native Krzysztof Krol, provides picnic sustenance.

For a taste of Wisconsin winemaking, stop by **Anchored Roots Vineyard & Winery** in Egg Harbor, where Eric and Amy Gale produce rosés, reds, and crisp white wines made from a blend of hardy grapes bred for cold climates. **Sway Brewing + Blending** in the fishing town of Baileys Harbor celebrates the Midwest with its beers, which are made from locally sourced ingredients such as spruce tips, cherries, and flowers. In the mornings, the light-filled space doubles as a bakery and coffee shop, serving cinnamon rolls and scones made with flour from Wisconsin grains and coffee from Isely Coffee Roasters in Ephraim, eight miles away.

At **Cultured** in Sister Bay, Mattea Fischer is devoted to all things fermented: sauerkraut, kimchi, and sourdough bread and bagels that draw locals for flavors including asiago and black pepper.

Wisconsin supper clubs—most often known for their relaxed, social atmosphere and set menus—are a thing: Family-owned **Donny's Glidden Lodge Restaurant** on the shores of Lake Michigan is a solid option. Go for the Friday fish fry and order a brandy old-fashioned, Wisconsin's official state cocktail. Reservations are highly recommended.

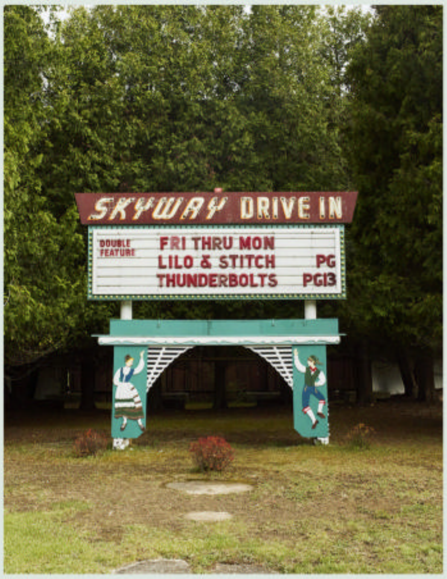
WHAT TO DO

Explore some of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the Midwest at the **Ridges Sanctuary**, established in 1937 as Wisconsin's first land trust and today one of the peninsula's foremost forces in conservation. Trails are open from dawn until dusk, and guided hikes happen Monday through Saturday from summer to fall.

In Fish Creek, catch an outdoor performance of the **Peninsula Players Theatre**, which has been staging comedies, dramas, and musicals since 1935. (It is the oldest professional resident summer theater in the country.) An all-weather pavilion means the show always goes on; the 2025 season runs from June to October. Another company, **Northern Sky Theater**, performs year-round in Peninsula State Park.

Door County produces roughly 99 percent of the state's tart cherries, which appear around the peninsula in everything from baked strudel to atop glazed salmon. To pick the fruit yourself, head to **Soren's Valhalla Orchards** in Sturgeon Bay (open from June to October), where founder and fourth-generation farmer Toni Sorenson is eager to talk about the heritage of fruit growing in the area.

For hiking, biking, history, and wildlife viewing, hop on the ferry to Door County's islands: With a lavender farm and Schoolhouse Beach—renowned for some of the clearest water in the U.S.—**Washington Island** is the county's largest, most popular island, and the only one with year-round residents; **Rock Island**, slightly northeast, has an Icelandic-style boathouse, 10 miles of trails, and the oldest lighthouse on Lake Michigan.


SKYWAY DRIVE IN
DOUBLE FEATURE
FRI THRU MON
LILO & STITCH PG
THUNDERBOLTS PG13

Clockwise from top left: Dinner at Earl's Sister Bay Bowl; Island Orchard Cider employees Diego Anderson and Ashtyn Farrell; Rusty Dusty Vintage & Records sells antiques and collectibles; Skyway Drive-In Theatre in Fish Creek has been open every summer since 1950; Bay Breeze Resort in Ephraim has views of Eagle Harbor.

Clockwise from top left: Shawn Murray of Folk Tree Farm on Washington Island; Earl's Sister Bay Bowl; Hotel Washington; Ellison Bay has a population of around 250 people; fried cheese curds and brandy old-fashioneds are specialties in Wisconsin.

here when she was a baby. In 2014, after being widowed, she bought the eight-bedroom Hotel Washington with a vision of what it, and she, could do for the community. (The hotel still has shared bathrooms, though they're more well-appointed today.) Her first innovation was the farm-to-table restaurant with seasonal menus that showcase island products; in 2017 she helped set up Gathering Ground, a nonprofit that promotes sustainable agriculture through its incubator farm, internships, and weekly farmers' market.

We get in the car and visit her beekeeper friend Sue Dompke, who combines her honey-and-beeswax business with research and education, including hands-on workshops. Then it's on to Shawn Murray and Casey Dahl and their three goats at Folk Tree Farm. Together, they also manage an apple orchard for a cidery on the mainland, and I promise to visit the taproom in Ellison Bay when I'm back.

But today we're exploring their own small orchard, where we walk by rows of tomatoes, lettuce, and beans to arrive at an old wood homestead cabin. A year ago, the island's first documented tornado whipped through here. Resilience is vital to island life, and the unpredictable conditions accompanying climate change will demand more of it. "You're especially aware of supporting your local community here," says Murray, who believes the future will require not just finding sustainable solutions, but "pacing life completely differently."

On the ferry back I resolve to heed the lesson. I could spend my final hours hurtling around the peninsula—*there are still four more state parks to see!*—but instead I return to Sister Bay for a slice of true Wisconsin:

Earl's Sister Bay Bowl, a bar near the Dörr hotel where locals eat fried perch and talk about how their fishing went, and where the bowlers using the six alleys at the back score their games.

The interior—with its lit BUDWEISER signs and coin-operated arcade games—is a world away from the Dörr's sleek proposition. Manager Paula Anschutz introduces me to the state's official cocktail, a brandy old-fashioned, which she serves sweet or sour or with seltzer. I decide to try one of each. By the second drink, I'm eating cheese curds with a group of Paula's cousins. By the third, Paula's mother, Penny Anschutz, the bar's owner, has me helping reset one of the broken lanes.

Paula tells me that this place has been in the family for four generations: Her great-grandpa bought it in 1944 when the bar was a hotel. "This [space] used to be the dance hall," she says. "In 1958, my grandpa said, 'Dancing's out, and bowling's in' and put in the lanes." For the first two years, the pins were set and replaced by hand.

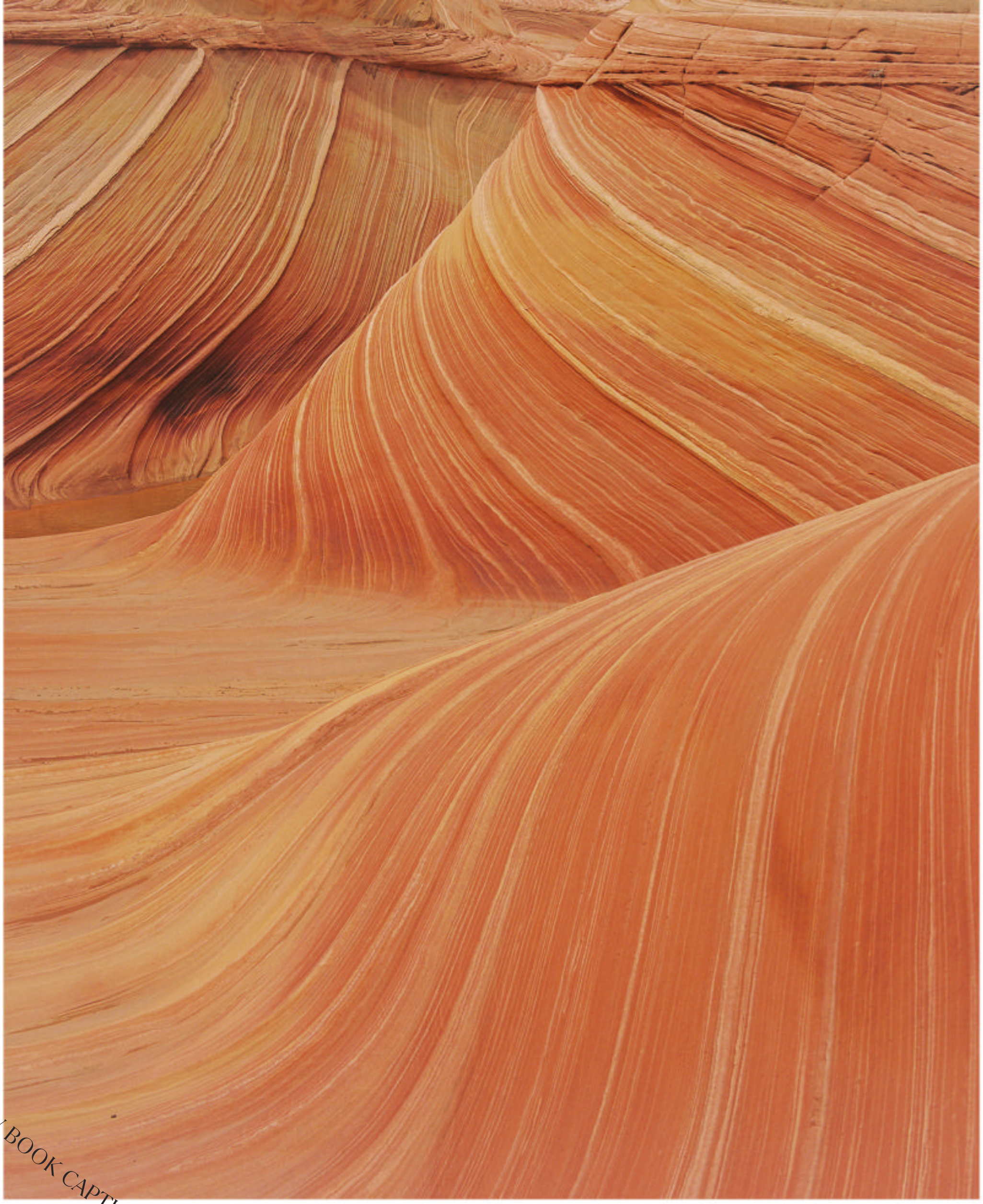
Later that night, after a couple more of the bar's brandy old-fashioneds, I consider Paula Anschutz's story, and the stories of everyone else I've met along the way. I realize that the communities of Door County have always known how to accommodate change—they just do so on their own time. Maybe the slower, more considered pace of life is exactly what is required to create a more sustainable place, and a more sustainable future. In this way, the next generation of peninsula dwellers may prove a model for us all. Ⓐ

Afar contributing writer Emma John followed Mississippi's Blues Trail for the Winter 2025 issue. Photographer Christina Holmes is profiled on page 12.

ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

PHOTOGRAPHER

OWENS RIVER, MAMMOTH LAKES, CALIFORNIA



THE WAVE, COYOTE BUTTES, ARIZONA

BRIAN CHORSKI'S NEW BOOK CAPTURES INTIMATE, ALLURING ENCOUNTERS WITH THE AMERICAN WEST. BY ELLEN CARPENTER

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

I

"I'M EXPERIENCE FIRST, photos second," says Los Angeles–based photographer Brian Chorski, whose new book, *Another Patch of Sky* (Guest Editions, 2025), offers a seductive, and strangely intimate, impression of natural beauty in the western United States and Mexico.

The title signifies Chorski's freewheeling mode of travel, "just stumbling upon another patch of sky," he says. And the book presents a kind of pastoral voyeurism in its collection of photos from trips made with friends between 2019 and 2024: swimming in California's Mammoth Lakes, hiking in Montana's Glacier National Park, fishing in Baja, Mexico, and more. "I hope it's obvious that I had an amazing time," he says. "I could confidently say I would have been happy having gone on those trips without making any photos I was happy with."

A Wisconsin native who sums up his childhood as "waiting for summer," Chorski got into photography while studying abroad in Lyon, France. A friend encouraged him to buy his first camera, a Canon Rebel, and he quickly became obsessed with photographing landscapes. A move to San Francisco in 2016—he drove his 2001 Buick Century across the country—ushered in "that first period of excitement and romanticization with the Mountain West."

Soon, he was spending weekends road-tripping and documenting the experience on film. "I feel like analog keeps me grounded," Chorski says. "For me, it really boils down to being honest about the colors the eye sees." While the mountain and desert landscapes helped shape his compositions, he found himself wanting to capture more in his frames. "I think I was most inspired by my friends, like, ripping their shirts off and jumping into lakes instead of just the landscape itself."

As Chorski grew more serious about photography, he also started studying more art. He was particularly taken by the work of Mike Brodie, who, between 2004 and 2008, freight-hopped across the U.S. and chronicled with his Polaroid the people he met along the way. "The way he captured subjects moving through places in the West was super transformative for me," Chorski says.

He already has an eye to new projects—including a deep dive into his home state of Wisconsin—but he knows he'll never grow tired of exploring California's Sierra range or the sandstone canyons of Utah. "The West just has this openness to it," Chorski says. "It's freedom."

Another Patch of Sky

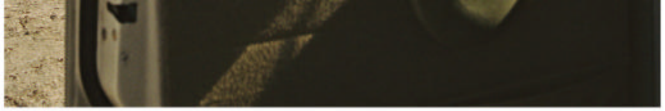
Another Patch of Sky
by Brian Chorski
(Guest Editions, 2025)
is available now.

TRONA, CALIFORNIA

INFORMATION
LOST & FOUND

TUCSON, ARIZONA

OWENS RIVER, MAMMOTH LAKES, CALIFORNIA



LAKE POWELL, UTAH

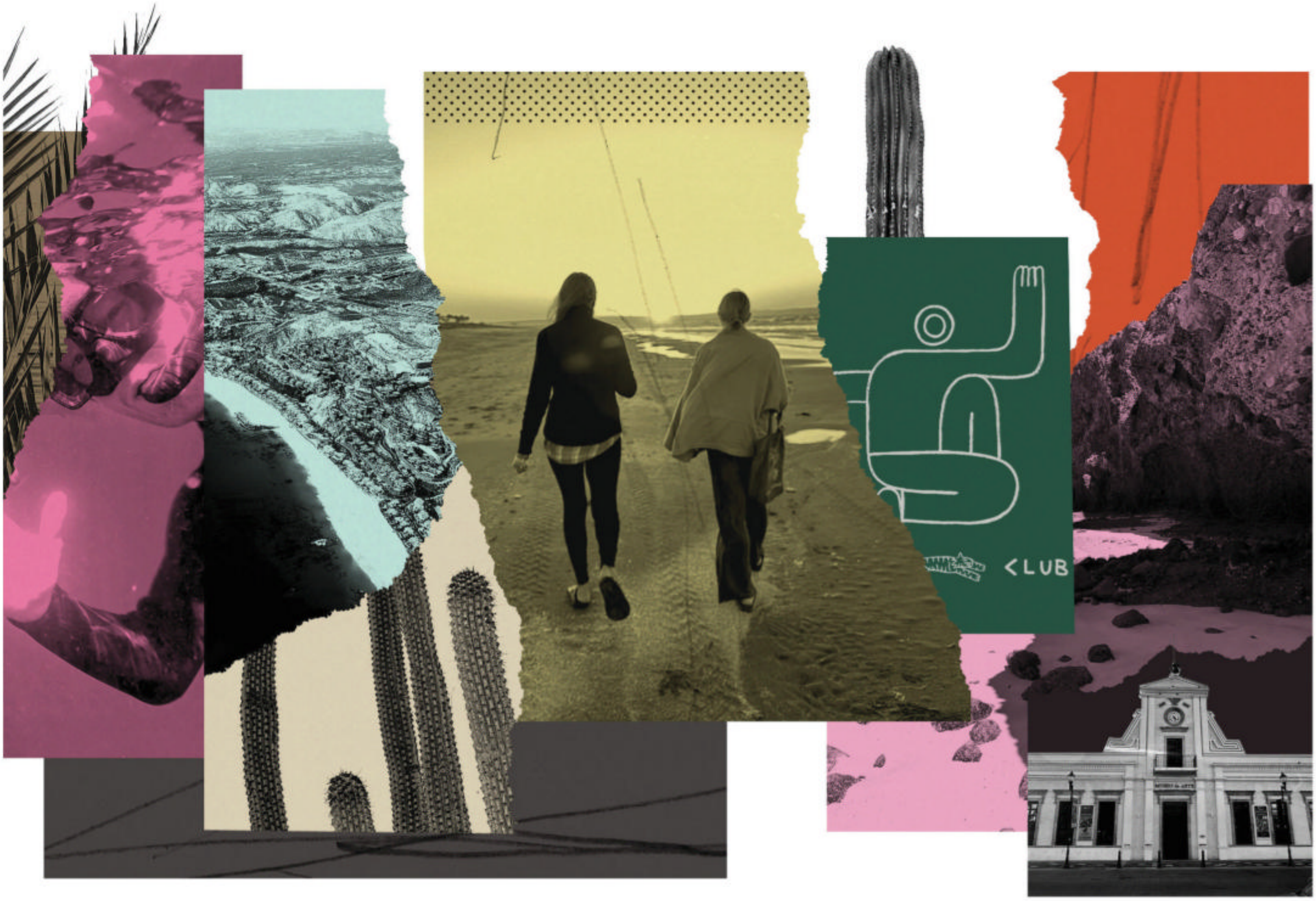
LAKE MCDONALD,
GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, MONTANA

BAJA, MEXICO

LAKE SABRINA TRAIL, BISHOP, CALIFORNIA

OWENS RIVER, BISHOP, CALIFORNIA

CROSSING
HOT DAWG
HOT DAWG



Finding Peace in La Paz

by Michelle Heimerman, *Afar Director of Photography*

BEFORE US WAS possibly the largest tower of nachos on Mexico's Baja California peninsula. The sun was setting behind sailboats in the marina, and we toasted with Negra Modelo beers, my uncle's go-to order. These were his favorite nachos, and this was the first time my aunt was ordering them since he died a year and a half ago. My husband and I had flown down to join her, as well as to enjoy the gorgeous desert-meets-sea city of La Paz, where my aunt and uncle had spent months every winter.

To get there, we drove three hours north from Cabo's international airport, winding through cactus-dotted hills and catching glimpses of the Pacific Ocean. Our first evening in La Paz, we walked with my aunt along the *malecón*, a waterfront promenade that stretches for more than three miles in the city center. Families gathered to watch the sunset, in-line skaters sped by, local bands sang for people ready to dance, and pelicans repeatedly dove into the water.

My aunt and uncle loved the timeless, laid-back vibe here, but La Paz is also becoming known for its new crop of restaurants. One evening, we ate at Tiger Club, a Southeast Asian–inspired eatery with an impressive natural wine selection. Another night we tried the tasting menu at Nemi, opened in 2019 by Alejandro Villagómez, a former chef at the two-Michelin-star restaurant Pujol in Mexico City.

La Paz is known for its stretch of the Gulf of California, so we hired a guide and boat with On Board Baja. Bouncing in sync with the waves, we followed a family of humpback whales, glided among sea lions, and passed blue-footed boobies sunbathing on a rock. For lunch, we anchored in a cove near Balandra Beach. While our guide prepared fresh ceviche, we paddleboarded on the turquoise water.

Between it all, I shared quieter moments with my aunt, including a three-hour beach walk with nobody around for miles. We talked about whether she'll return to La Paz next winter. Is it worth it to travel back to a place that brought such joy with a partner if he is no longer around to share it? It certainly wasn't easy, but remembering some of my uncle's happiest moments at his favorite spots kept his spirit alive. It felt like we were exactly where he would want us to be, eating nachos together, just as he would like. Ⓐ

Art by MARK HARRIS

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

WE'RE ALL CONNECTED:
AMERICA

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RANGE ROVER

A MASTERPIECE OF DESIGN

Vehicle shown: 2025 Range Rover. © 2025 Jaguar Land Rover North America, LLC